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***Musica Christi***  
**A Lutheran Aesthetic**

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By

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2003



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## ***Preludium***

*You must participate in singing these melodic miracles,  
if you want to feel how they weld the singing group into a spiritual unit.*  
– Paul Hindemith

If one were to sit in the assembly of a Lutheran congregation in the United States on a Sunday morning, the primary sense organ employed would be the ears. There also would be significant stimuli for the organs of sight, taste, smell and touch, but sound has priority of place. The auditor would hear spoken sound and musical sound. Some speaking would be done by an individual or individuals. Some speaking would be done by the entire assembly together. Some speaking would be done as if in dialogue between the individuals and the assembly.

The auditor would be struck by the abundance of musical sounds intermingled with the speaking. The gathering of the assembly would be marked, beginning and end, by instrumental music—music performed by organs or pianos, by wind, string or percussion instruments. There would be singing in the assembly, like the speaking, done sometimes by individuals, sometimes by the entire assembly or a select portion of the assembly, and sometimes as if in dialogue between the assembly and the individuals or between the assembly and the select group.

The auditor would hear all of this and perhaps be drawn into participation by some mysterious compulsion. Perhaps the auditor might feel prohibited from participating through some mysterious compulsion. Either way the auditor would

sense that there is more at work in that place than meets the ears. This study addresses the auditor's question: "What is going on here?"

The Swiss Roman Catholic theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, kindled a rebirth of beauty as the starting point of the theological path.<sup>1</sup> Along this path he found company with his fellow Swiss, the Reformed theologian, Karl Barth. Of Barth's theology von Balthasar notes, admiringly,

...form remains actualistic and energetic, and yet it was intended and presented as the *real form* of God's objective act of revelation. Such an intention and manner of presentation both justifies and logically compels Barth, at the conclusion of his treatment of the doctrine of the divine perfections, to restore to God the attribute of 'beauty' for the first time in the history of Protestant theology.<sup>2</sup>

Not surprisingly, then, theological aesthetics has become a frequent subject for written and oral discussion and debate among Roman Catholics and the Reformed.<sup>3</sup>

Von Balthasar was no admirer of Lutheranism, darkly summarizing Luther's impact on aesthetics as resulting in a dialectic:

This dialectic now places us at a final crossroads. We may decide, on the one hand, that the dialectic is to be understood as the exuberant outpouring of the Gospel's nuptial love, a love which, in the 'blessed despair' of a wholly self-surrendering faith, places all human skill and art at the disposal of the one divine Art. With such a surrender the divine Art can accomplish *sub contrario* (!) what man obstinately and vainly tries to achieve both *sub recto* and *sub contrario*.... On the other hand—and this is our other alternative—the dialectic may be wrenched loose from the mystery of love which generates it and

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord, Vol. 1*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, ed. Joseph Fessio and John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Roman Catholic writers, Louis Dupré, Aidan Nichols and the former Anglican, John Saward, have added extensively to the literature by taking up von Balthasar's views. Among the Reformed in the USA are Calvin Stapert, John Witvliet and Nicholas Wolterstorff. In the Anglican Communion a growing bibliography on theological aesthetics has emerged from Jeremy Begbie, writing from the Reformed perspective, as well as from David Brown, Ann Loades, *et al.* who combine Catholic and Reformed insights in Anglicanism's inimitable way.



be expanded to the proportions of a negation, a cold methodological protest.<sup>4</sup>

It is the latter, the “cold methodological protest”, which von Balthasar observes as having prevailed,<sup>5</sup> and whilst he is correct in noting that aesthetics has suffered in the hands of Lutheran theologians despite the rich and prized tradition of the arts, particularly music, within the Lutheran Church, he is incorrect in concluding that the core confession of the Reformers—the justification of the sinner before God by grace, through faith, for Christ’s sake<sup>6</sup>—is inherently antithetical to a theological aesthetic. For while the profound musical tradition among Lutherans and the rigorous exegetical and doctrinal scholarship among Lutherans have too often not been on speaking terms, this disjunction was not present from the beginning. It has not always been so, nor should it exist in the present.

The Lutheran voice, tragically, is too little heard in the United States within the theological discussions concerning aesthetics, tragic because Lutheran theology, a theology adopts a significantly different approach to aesthetics than that of either von Balthasar or Barth or their heirs. Beauty is by no means anathema to Lutheran theology, occupied as it is not with a holiness of beauty but rather the beauty of holiness, a holiness that is known *by* faith as trust and *in* faith as essence through

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<sup>4</sup> Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord, Vol. 1*, pp. 47-48. Only one Lutheran philosopher receives a complimentary assessment by von Balthasar: Gerhard Nebel, *Das Ereignis des Schönen* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1953). Von Balthasar praises Nebel because Nebel approaches aesthetics in a similar way as von Balthasar. However, Nebel centers his study on the concept of “event”, *e.g.* the event of the crucifixion or the event of the resurrection, rather than on the whole person and work of Christ, as this present study does. Nebel’s aesthetics might have reflected his Lutheranism more thoroughly had he developed it from his own study of Greek tragedies. See Gerhard Nebel, *Weltangst und Götterzorn* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1951).

<sup>5</sup> Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord, Vol. 1*, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> See *Augsburg Confession, Article IV*. In this paper, unless otherwise noted, quotations from the Lutheran Confessions will be from *The Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, trans. Charles Arand, Eric Gritsch, Robert Kolb, William Russell, James Schaaf, Jane Strohl and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

participation in Christ Jesus who is the full revelation of God in human, worldly form. It is a theology which begins with Jesus the Christ, without needing to move to another theological focus, since Christ remains the center for all of theology, as indeed also for aesthetics, since “the concept of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ contains within itself the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Spirit.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, a Christological aesthetic will be a Trinitarian aesthetic, without Trinitarian doctrine overcoming, as it were, Christology!

Accordingly, Lutherans make aesthetic assertions, *pace* von Balthasar, on the basis of faith, an *analogia fidei* so to speak, because of the revelation of God in and by His Son. Aesthetic assertions are also made, *pace* Barth, on the basis of essence, the *analogia entis*, because the Jesus who is Son of God is fully human and fully divine, not by confusion of substance but by unity of person.<sup>8</sup> The crucial point is that even in Christology “the common ‘nature’ of the Trinitarian God confronts the sphere of human existence as a single reality, and the one person with whom Christology is concerned is certainly the same as that about whom statements must be made in the doctrine of the Trinity.”<sup>9</sup> Consequently the Beautiful is understood among Lutherans according to the human and the divine natures in Jesus, perceived in faith. The basic principle is that rather than beauty leading to participation in Christ, a Lutheran aesthetic comes to recognize beauty because of one’s participation in Christ.

Strangely enough, the Christological shape of aesthetics is a stream largely ignored by Lutherans in the USA, though much less so by the Lutheran churches in

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<sup>7</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkens and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), p. 180.

<sup>8</sup> The Athanasian Creed

<sup>9</sup> Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 343.



Europe. Among Lutherans in the USA the subject of aesthetics, if discussed at all, is consumed by stylistic debates, and tends to be centered on the First or Third Articles of the Creed—music as a phenomenon of creation or as a work of the *Spiritus Creator*—but rarely under the Second Article, and then only with vague reference to incarnational language. The historian and literary critic, Jacques Barzun, would call this a “thought-cliché.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, the term “incarnational” has come to be used so frequently and without precision that it gives the illusion of thought while lacking the rigor of theological reflection. My thesis, therefore, is a new study which addresses the absence of appropriate discussions among Lutherans in the USA, as well as being an English language contribution to the discussion of theological aesthetics that may take place among Lutherans in Europe.

Secondarily this study serves to introduce to an English speaking audience a number of works by European Lutheran theologians and musicians, past and present, whose thoughts have yet to find a voice in English. My intention is to inspire Lutherans to further research outside our too-often parochial cultural debates in the United States. Unless otherwise documented the translations from Danish, German, Latin, Norwegian and Swedish are my own.

This study will address the hypothetical auditor’s question posited at the beginning—“What is going on here?”—in terms of the music the auditor is hearing, in terms of the composers and performers of the music the auditor is hearing, and in terms of the time and space in which the auditor hears this music. The bulk of this study, which forms Part One, is an historical survey of Lutheran church music from

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<sup>10</sup> See Jacques Barzun, *The House of Intellect*, Perennial Classics (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2002), p. 53

the Reformation era to the present. It is primarily, though not exclusively, focused on the vocal music of the Lutheran Church's musical heritage. I will note how various church musicians and theologians have understood the answer to the auditor's question, since in each era of Lutheran church music history the answer is different, in part, from each of the other eras. Yet within the entire scope of Lutheran church music history there is unity. I have to be selective as well as representative, and I will claim that this unity comes by Jesus the Christ, God and Man, two natures in one person.

Part Two will draw together the Christological insights of Part One and develop my thesis about the centrality of a Christological aesthetic in Lutheran church music. I am not advancing a paradigm imposed upon music history to which faith must be conformed. Rather I am arguing for the recognition of the unifying form of beauty revealed in Christ to faith which has found expression, in many and various ways, consciously and unconsciously, within the traditions of Lutheranism. For while there is no *locus* entitled *De musica* in Christology (or within the entire Lutheran *corpus doctrinae*), nevertheless as music is attended to in respect of the various Christological *loci* its true beauty is recognized.

The relationship between Part One and Part Two, between history and doctrine, is sometimes explicit sometimes implicit, but the two parts always impact each other. The Lutheran answer to the auditor's question, "What is going on here?" will come simultaneously in doctrine and in history, through the faith revealed, confessed and lived in participation with Christ Jesus.



# Part One

## *An Historical Survey of Music in the Lutheran Church*

*Woe to the musician who fails alike to learn and love  
the good things in the old masters  
and to watch and be ready for the new  
that may come in a totally different form than we expected.*  
— Carl Nielsen



## Chapter 1 *Cantus-Firmus: Laying the Foundation* The Reformation Era

*Music is God's greatest gift. It has often so stimulated and stirred me  
that I felt the desire to preach. — Martin Luther*

On October 31, 1517, when the Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the *Schlosskirche* in Wittenberg, his concern was over an abuse: the sale of the forgiveness of sins by letters of indulgence.<sup>1</sup> On June 25, 1530, the princes and estates which supported the Lutheran cause that developed after 1517 met with Emperor Charles V at Augsburg, and presented their Confession. The Augsburg Confession addressed, in part, the abuses which the Lutherans identified within the Church.<sup>2</sup>

While the initial cause was the abuses that the Reformers were compelled to correct, the Reformation quickly became an issue of the authority by which such changes were made. The Lutheran response to the question of authority came by reference to the Holy Scriptures, and then by reference to the writings of the Church Fathers. Where the tradition of the Fathers differed from the Scriptures, in matters essential to the faith, the Scriptures alone, as the divine revelation of God, were to be the norm.

Therefore, while the correcting of abuses by the authority of the Scriptures alone is an initial cause, as also an on-going cause (*semper reformanda*) since abuses

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, "The Ninety-five Theses, 1517," trans. C. M. Jacobs, *Luther's Works, Vol. 31, Career of the Reformer I* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), p. 30

continue to creep into the Church, the greater emphasis is placed by the Reformers on the receiving of the grace, faith and Christ (*sola gratia, sola fidei, solus Christus*), made known by the divine Word of promise within the Holy Scriptures (*sola scriptura*). For this task, and in view of the Lutheran desire not to depart from the tradition of the Catholic Church, music became a prized gift to serve the multitude of Lutheran concerns.

Drawn to Wittenberg, to the University, to the Reform and to Martin Luther, was a collection of remarkably gifted and thoughtful theologians and musicians. Their collected abilities would indelibly stamp the character of music for Lutherans. Succeeding generations of Lutheran musicians and theologians would develop their thoughts further, coloring them with new insights, but the die was cast in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In this first chapter the formative musical-theological work of Martin Luther, Johann Walter and Georg Rhau will be examined. Additionally, the chapter will include a brief survey of how this music of the Lutheran Reformation in Electoral Saxony was exported with Lutheran theology into the Reformation of the Church in the Scandinavian kingdoms.

### *Martin Luther—Singing and Saying the Gospel*

Martin Luther's assertion that music is "a gift of God and next to theology, deserving the highest praise"<sup>3</sup> is an insight of the Reformer that is too little explored in

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<sup>2</sup> *Augsburg Confession, Conclusion of Part One*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther, "Preface to Georg Rhau's *Symphoniae iucundae*," trans. Ullrich S. Leupold, *Luther's Works, Vol. 53, Liturgy and Hymns* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 323.



the vast corpus of literature on the man who lived

‘sub specie aeternitatis,’ in the light of eternity; not in the mild glow of constant progress toward Heaven, but in the shadow of the chaos of the Last Days and the imminence of eternity.<sup>4</sup>

“A new miracle deserves a new song,”<sup>5</sup> he declared concerning the role of music in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a troubled world. Luther recognized that music like the divine Word—the Incarnate Word, the proclaimed Word, the sacramental Word, the scriptural Word, Luther’s use of the term “Word” is inclusive of all of these—can move human emotions.

Of all the pleasures, joys and mirth  
 There is no finer on the earth.  
 Than sound of woodwind or of string  
 Or of the voice with which I sing  
 No ill mood can be present where  
 A group with singing fills the air.  
 For anger, hatred, envy, strife,  
 Downheartedness, and cares of life.  
 Flee from the sound of joyous song  
 And take attendant ills along.<sup>6</sup>

In his outspoken acclaim for music’s art, the Reformer almost reaches the point of claiming music as inherently Christian.

The devil, the creator of saddening care and disquieting worries, takes flight at the sound of music almost *as he takes flight from the word of theology* [emphasis added].<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> “Auff ein new Wunderwerck gehort ein neues Lied...” Martin Luther in an inscription with Psalm 149:1 the cover of a Bible presented in 1541 to Wolf Heinz, organist at Halle; see *WA[Weimar Ausgabe]* 48, 85-86:116 for the entire inscription.

<sup>6</sup> From a poem by Martin Luther, “Lady Music Sings” [*Frau Musica*], trans. F. Samuel Janzow; See Carl Schalk, *Music in Early Lutheranism: Shaping the Tradition (1524-1672)* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), p. 195. For the original text, see Martin Luther. “Vorrede auf alle gute Gesanbücher,” *Johann Walter, Sämtlich Werke, Bd. 6* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1973), p. 153.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Luther in a letter to the composer Ludwig Senfl, October 4, 1530; see Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works, Vol. 49, Letters II*, ed. & trans. Gottfried G. Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 428.

If music has such an effect on the anti-Christian affairs of the devil, it must, by implication, bear something of the nature of the Christ.

That Martin Luther wrote often, expressing himself about the mutual influence of music and theology on each other and on Christian faith, is well-documented. How the Reformer put these thoughts into practice is not nearly so often noted.

Things come together for Luther, as for example theology and music, which we tend to keep apart...We tend to misunderstand the way Luther does theology due to modern patterns of thought which are self-evident to us. One of these patterns of thought is the distinction we make between theory and praxis and the way we understand their mutual order: Theory precedes praxis and shall be put into praxis...Luther, on the other hand, seems to do theology in another way, keeping theory and praxis closely together.<sup>8</sup>

In December 1523 Luther published his outline and rationale for an evangelical mass. This publication, *Formula Missae et Communionis pro Ecclesia Vuittembergensi*, addressed the reform of the order of the mass, but has only minimal references to the music of the evangelical mass. In keeping with his conservative nature in matters of reform Luther notes that the choir may continue to sing the portions of the mass the choir had been accustomed to singing. Luther mentions in particular the singing of the Introit (as long as the Introit was taken from the Psalms or another passage of Scripture), the Kyrie eleison “in the form in which it has been used until now, with the various melodies for different seasons,”<sup>9</sup> the Gloria in excelsis, the Gradual (but only a limit of two verses<sup>10</sup>), and the Nicene Creed. In each of these

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<sup>8</sup> Carl Axel Aurelius, “A New Song Here Shall Be Begun: The Hymns of Martin Luther” (Paper read at the Anglo-Nordic-Baltic Theological Conference, “Theology and Music,” July 25-30, 2001, Århus, Denmark), p. 8. See also Robin Leaver, “Theological Consistency, Liturgical Integrity, and Musical Hermeneutics in Luther’s Liturgical Reform,” *Lutheran Quarterly* IX, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 124.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Luther, “An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg, 1523,” trans. Paul Zeller Strodach, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 53, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.



references, Luther accepts and maintains the custom of singing these portions of the mass, but he does not specify melodies or composers. The Gregorian melodies customarily used would have been of sufficient familiarity to his reader that Luther had no need to make further specifications. Only three sequences are named: *Grates nunc omnes*, *Sancti Spiritus* and *Veni sancte spiritus*.<sup>11</sup>

Luther then discusses that portion of the mass which is the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Here, too, the Reformer maintains the use of the choir singing the Sanctus and Benedictus, the Agnus Dei and at the conclusion—in place of the *Ite missa*—the *Benedicamus domino* may be spoken with sung alleluias “according to its own melodies.” Once again, because the melodies for these texts would be familiar to his reader Luther makes no mention of the ones he has in mind. He also suggests that the *Benedicamus* may be borrowed (and, by implication, sung) from Vespers.

Luther makes no other mention of specific details concerning the music the choir is to sing in his evangelical mass. He only notes a principle:

Let us approve each other's rites lest schisms and sects should result from this diversity in rites—as has happened in the Roman church. For external rites, even though we cannot do without them—just as we cannot do without food or drink—do not commend us to God, even as foods do not commend us to him. Faith and love commend us to God.... So the kingdom of God is not any rite, but faith within you, etc.<sup>12</sup>

As a parting thought Luther appends some thoughts on congregational singing.

Though brief, these comments hint at the developments to come in the near future.

I also wish that we had as many songs as possible in the vernacular which the people could sing during mass, immediately after the gradual and also after the Sanctus and Agnus Dei. For who doubts that

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<sup>11</sup> *Luther's Works*, Vol. 53, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.



originally all the people sang these which now only the choir sings or responds to while the bishop is consecrating?<sup>13</sup>

Luther does not insist upon congregational singing as a replacement for the choir's sung Latin texts (even though he suggests that the choir had usurped the congregation's singing). His desire is to enrich the evangelical mass by the inclusion—or more accurately, the restoration—of the ancient practice of singing by the congregation.

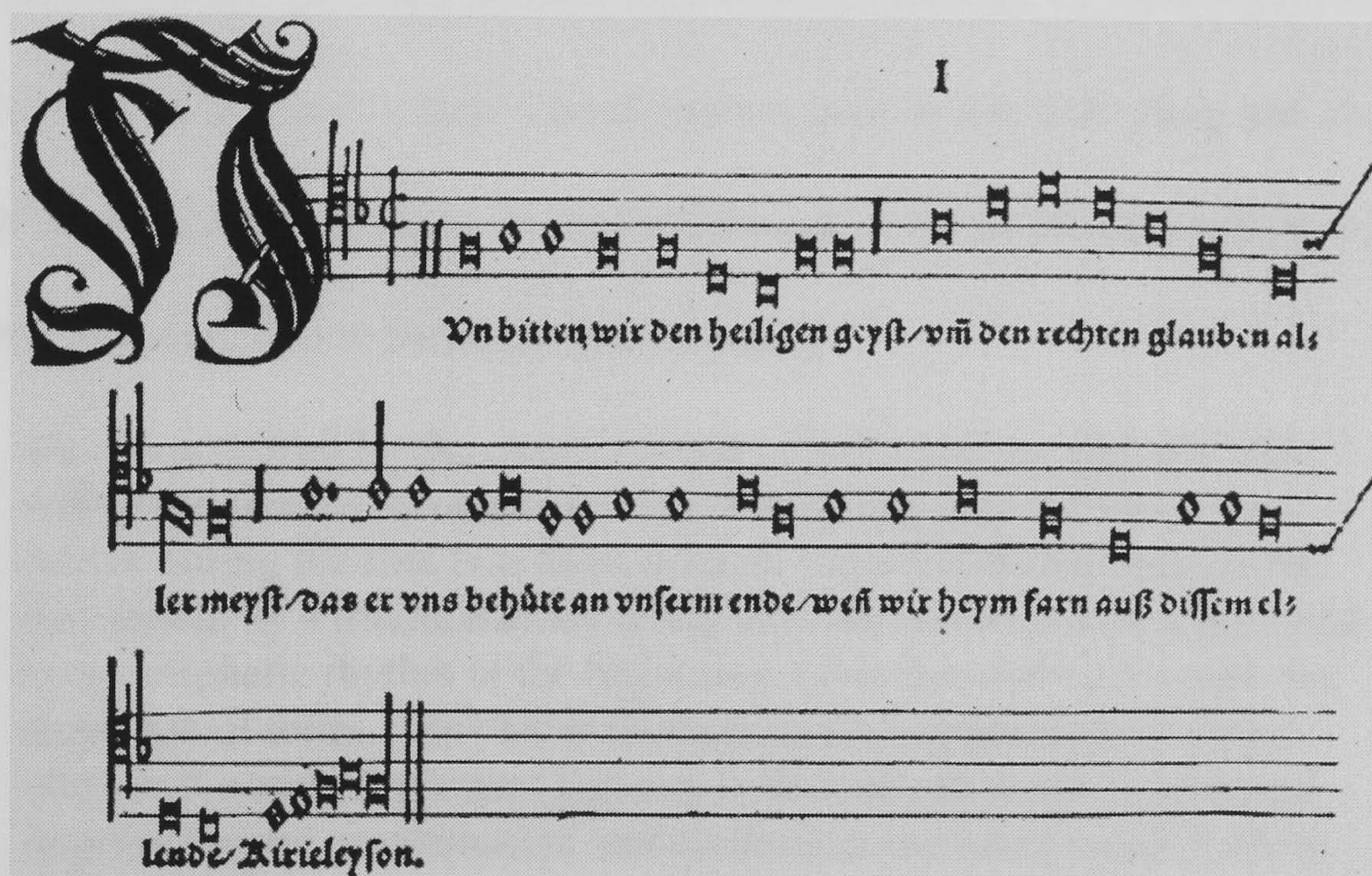


Figure 1 *Nun bitten wir* from the tenor partbook of Walter's *Geystliche Gesangbüchlin*, 1525

Owing to a dearth of evangelical poets, Luther's list of vernacular songs for the congregational singing in the *Formula Missae* is very modest. After the Communion, Luther suggests the singing of the very popular pre-Reformation hymn, *Gott sey gelobet*. Another "good hymn" is *Nu bitten wyr den heiligen geyst* (Fig. 1). Like the first mentioned hymn this too is a German *leise*, a sacred folk song in which each stanza ends with the phrase *kyrieleis*, an abbreviation of *kyrie eleison*. *Nun bitten wir*

<sup>13</sup> *Luther's Works*, Vol. 53, p. 36.



had been extremely popular with the German people since the Middle Ages and would remain popular in Lutheran congregations. Its pentatonic melodic structure suggests a very great age as a folk melody. The third and final suggestion of a good hymn, in Luther's mind, is the old Christmas hymn *Ein Kindelein so liebelich* based upon the melody of *Dies est laetitiae*.<sup>14</sup> “[To] praise God and give thanks for the revealed truth of his words...is the kind of vernacular songs I should like us to have.”<sup>15</sup>

Martin Luther has been credited with writing thirty-six *lieder* for the evangelical Church. Among his most widely known hymns, such as *Ein feste Burg* and *Vom Himmel hoch*, several are based on the Ionian mode, a mode strongly related to the modern major key. These particular Ionian works

are characterized by the steady pursuit of a descending melodic idea within the span of an octave (usually traversing stepwise the entire octave during the first two lines, with an intermediate cadence on the dominant), by a triadic melody along with the stepwise movement, and by an emphatic rhythm at the beginning, often intensified through the repetition of tones. This latter characterization appears surprisingly often in the early Protestant lied and is derived...from the heightened impulse toward proclamation and confession shown by many texts in this group.<sup>16</sup>

Luther composed one hymn, *Aus tiefer Not* based upon Psalm 130 (*Fig. 2*, next page), in the Phrygian mode—“loud words, hideous battles and bold deeds suit this tone.”<sup>17</sup> The hymn's text together with the affect of the Phrygian mode has *die rechte Art* (“the genuine style”)<sup>18</sup> that Luther always endeavored to attain. Other sources for

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<sup>14</sup> *Luther's Works*, Vol. 53, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1974), p. 38.

<sup>17</sup> “Mode,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 16, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishing Co., 2001), p. 799.

<sup>18</sup> Martin Luther in a letter to Hans von Minkwitz, December 1524: see *WA* [*Weimer Ausgabe*], Br 3, No. 812, p. 412.



congregational song at this time early in the Reformation included strophic settings of Catholic hymns—*Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* for *Veni redemptor gentium*, *Komm Gott Schöpfer, heiligen Geist* for *Veni creator spiritus*, or *Ein Kindlein geboren zu Bethlehem* for *Puer natus in Bethlehem*.



Figure 2 *Aus tiefer not* from the tenor partbook of Walter's *Geystliche Gesangbüchlin*, 1525

Many Lutheran songs came into the congregations through the technique of *contrafactum*, the creation of new, independent texts for existing popular melodies. This technique was not without its challenges. Luther's Christmas hymn, *Vom Himmel hoch*, was first written for a popular village melody. Luther then learned that this melody was still closely associated with the village taverns, so he wrote a new melody, the one associated with the text to this day.

Since the people in the Lutheran congregations would not have a printed hymnal in their own hands (and many would not be able to read it if they did), the *lieder* were intended to be easily learned, memorized and sung. In this way the Gospel



would be carried to the people in their singing at church and at home.

Therefore I, too, in order to make a start and to give an incentive to those who can do better, have with the help of others compiled several hymns, so that the holy gospel which now by the grace of God has risen anew may be noised and spread abroad...thus combining the good with the pleasing.<sup>19</sup>

Already in the *Formula Missae* of 1523 the seeds of a Lutheran Christological musical aesthetic are present. In the question of form, Luther maintains the historical order of the mass, purged of its theological aberrations, together with the Latin texts and melodies sung by the choir. Yet with this recognition of tradition, Luther juxtaposes the vernacular singing of the congregation; a practice, he maintains, that is so old it must become new again in his day. His judgment concerning the specific music to be used is guided by the principles of good theology and musical familiarity—the accustomed melodies for the Latin texts, the popular *leisen* for the vernacular. There is in this 1523 *Formula Missae* a preservation of what is good in the Church’s musical tradition. The details of Luther’s criteria for “good” music in the Church are yet to be outlined. These will appear in his second effort at tackling an evangelical mass, the thoroughly vernacular *Deutsche Messe* of 1526. At this point, however, it is clear that Luther hears a sung evangelical mass. He does not imagine any other variety.

So many vernacular orders of the mass had appeared in print around Germany that Luther’s friends urged him to bring uniformity to the evangelicals by crafting his own German mass. Luther resisted their urging, compelled by a defense of Christian freedom in such matters. He felt each evangelical center should be free either to devise

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<sup>19</sup> *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 53, p. 316.

its own liturgy or to borrow from others.<sup>20</sup> Still he also resisted any attempt to forcefully eliminate Latin from the mass for an exclusive use of the German language.

The Reformer's primary reason for not expanding on his 1523 suggestions was expressed in a tract entitled "Against the Heavenly Prophets."

I would gladly have a German mass today. I am also occupied with it. But I would very much like it to have a true German character. For to translate the Latin text and retain the Latin tone or notes has my sanction, though it doesn't sound polished or well done. Both the text and the notes, accent, melody, and manner or rendering ought to grow out of the true mother tongue and its inflection, otherwise all of it becomes an imitation in the manner of the apes.<sup>21</sup>

Whether the music sets a Latin text or a vernacular German text there is more at stake than simply aligning syllables and melodies for the music to be fully expressive of the text. Certainly, for Luther, the text and music must be a fully expressive unity for the sake of faith. At the same time the music and text must "have a genuine style" (*die rechte Art habe*).<sup>22</sup>

From 1500 to the end of the 16th century the relationship of word and sound [*Ton*] in musical compositions was held tightly together. The various reasons for this development...rested on the characteristic attempts of humanists to achieve better text clarity. It led finally to an intimate blend of word and sound [*Ton*]...<sup>23</sup>

In 1526 Martin Luther outlined his thoughts on a vernacular mass which

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<sup>20</sup> *WA* Br 3 No. 793, pp. 373-374.

<sup>21</sup> Martin Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments, 1525," trans. Bernhard Erling, *Luther's Works, Vol. 40, Church and Ministry II* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), p. 141. "These words were evidently directed against Thomas Müntzer, who had tried to fit the German words to the traditional plain-chant melodies." Ulrich S. Leupold, ed. in *Luther's Works, Vol. 53*, p. 54. Friedrich Blume offers more appreciation for Müntzer's efforts. "Müntzer's order anticipated much of Luther's in content...as well as in its form and its relationship to music. With Müntzer—a revolutionary extremist, to be sure, but a deeply religious man unjustly reproached by Luther—there already appeared hymns in the form of German lieder, some of which were taken over into the Lutheran songbooks." Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> Letter to Hans von Minkwitz, *WA*, Br 3, No. 812, p. 412.

<sup>23</sup> Lothar Hoffmann-Erbrecht, *Henricus Finck—musicus excellentissimus* (Köln: Gitarre und Laute Verlagsgesellschaft, 1982), p. 107. See also H. Bessler, *Die Musik des Mittelalters und der*



exhibited such “a genuine style.” Twenty-seven of the twenty-nine pages of the *Deutsche Messe* are filled with musical notation.<sup>24</sup> Luther’s own musical abilities are reflected in the care with which he set this vernacular mass. This care and attention to musical detail provides insight and concrete example to Luther’s own expression of “singing and saying” the Gospel, the heart of the Christian mass.

The expression “singing and saying” appears in Luther’s 1534 Christmas hymn, *Vom Himmel hoch*. The phrase becomes something of a motto for Luther’s estimation of music as being “next to theology.” In the opening stanza of that hymn Luther has the angel sing,

From heaven above to earth I come  
To bear good news to every home;  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,  
Whereof I now will say and sing.  
[*Davon ich sing’n und sagen will*]

For Luther the “singing and saying” of the Gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a seamless garment, the singing and the saying are woven together, neither the one without the other. So often does this expression appear in Luther’s writings that a 20<sup>th</sup> century Lutheran theologian can conclude,

With Jesus Christ a new age of music has been brought about.... Whoever has been delivered from sin, death and the devil by God’s beloved Son ‘cannot refrain but must joyfully and with delight sing and say.’ Yes, music becomes the dividing line at which faith and unbelief are separated; ‘whoever will not sing and say, that is a mark that the person does not believe and has not listened to the new, joyous Testament but rather has heeded the old, corrupt, miserable Testament.’ (Luther).... The outward shape of music is, therefore, not only for passing the Gospel along to the Elect, it also becomes a sign of the Gospel: the lifting of the Law and the joyful freedom of the children of

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*Renaissance, Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft* (Potsdam 1931-1934), pp. 251ff.

<sup>24</sup> See Martin Luther, “The German Mass and Order of Service. 1526.” *Luther’s Works, Vol. 53*, pp. 61-90.



God shine forth in the 'Round Dance' (*Tanzreigen*) of a hymn motet (*Liedmotette*).... The Gospel calls for music!<sup>25</sup>

The first thing to be noted in the *Deutsche Messe* is Luther's use of the church modes. In his day it was the custom to associate a specific affect to each of the modes.

The tradition that a mode has inherent expressive properties and extramusical associations was of ancient Greek origin; this notion is in fact an essential part of most modal systems. In the humanist Renaissance the doctrine of the inherent expressive properties of modes received powerful support from direct reference to classical sources. But the tradition of modal expressivity as well as the details of the eightfold system came to Renaissance musicians proximately from their medieval forbears.<sup>26</sup>

With one musical foot firmly grounded in the Middle Ages and another in the Renaissance, Luther is doubly appreciative of the modal affects. Though he does not express himself in writing concerning the origin of this understanding, his use of the modes clearly reflects his acceptance of this aesthetic/affective role in music.

Luther was not consciously aware of the difference between this concept of music [*musica speculativa* derived from Plato, Aristotle and Boethius] and his developing 'aesthetic' views—those determined by subjective and purely musical considerations...the true reformatory nature of Luther's concept of music lay precisely in [a] shifting of value from *scientia* to *ars*, the giving of the central place to performed music. True music is that which praises God, Christ, and the Gospel.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, within music's art joined to the Gospel, Luther could draw out the implications of the power in music from the nature of the God-Man Jesus Christ.

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<sup>25</sup> Oskar Söhnngen, *Theologie der Musik* (Kassel: Johannes Stauda Verlag, 1967), p. 321.

<sup>26</sup> "Mode". *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 16, p. 797. "One who composes in a tone should be careful not to use a sweet melody for a mournful subject, or a sad melody for a happy subject. He should take care, then, that the tune corresponds to the words. Thus, where words have a character of indignation and severity, he should deploy harsh and severe sounds, a need answered by the Third and Seventh Tones. When the words concern love, prayer, or mourning, it is appropriate to match them to the tearful, imploring tunes that arise from the Second, Fourth, and Sixth Tones. Words of praise and humility require pleasing chants, a quality usually attributed to the First, Fifth, and Eighth Tone." Martin Agricola, *The Rudiments of Music* [*Rudimenta Musices*, 1539], trans. John Trowell (Aberystwyth: Boethius Press, 1991), p. Dij.

<sup>27</sup> Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, pp. 10-12.



While he was intensely critical of speculative theology (“the theology that is speculative, which forgets itself and soars up into matters divine, is looking to Satan for a precipice—and finds it”<sup>28</sup>) the Gospel, joined with music, could carry the hearer where speculation could not. “The Holy Spirit Himself honors it as an instrument of His specific office.”<sup>29</sup>

In a discussion of assigning various modes to the chanting of the Lessons in the *Deutsche Messe*, Luther specifies the use of the eighth mode for the chanting of the Epistle and the fifth mode for the Gospel. “Christ is a kind Lord, and his words are sweet; therefore we want to take the sixth [fifth] mode for the Gospel; and because Paul is the serious apostle we want to arrange the eighth mode for the Epistle.”<sup>30</sup> That Luther specifies the fifth mode for the Gospel in his *Deutsche Messe*, while Johann Walter, Luther’s musical collaborator, recollects a Luther reference to the sixth mode is not necessarily a contradiction. In his pointing of the example in the *Deutsche Messe* the whole tone of the Gospel reading is set to the fifth, while the words of Christ are set to the sixth. The use of the two modes together in the Gospel reflect a similarity in musical sound—the fifth mode (*modus laetus*, mode of joy) centering on the pitch *c* while the sixth (*modus pietate probatum*, piously pleasant mode) centers on the pitch *f*—the musical affect is to set off the words of Christ from the words of the evangelist; a musical hermeneutic. Furthermore, while the affect assigned to the fifth mode is one of joy, the sixth mode’s devout affect also heightens the words of Christ

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<sup>28</sup> Martin Luther, in a lecture on Psalm 9:7; see *WA* 5, 300:18.

<sup>29</sup> Martin Luther, “Preface to Georg Rhau’s *Symphoniae iucundae*,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 53, p. 323.

<sup>30</sup> *Verba des alten Johann Walters* in Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum I* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, facsimile 1986), p. 451. Johann Walter’s recollection varies from Luther’s own statement about using the fifth mode in setting the Gospel text.

for the hearer.

Luther's assignment of the Epistle to the eighth mode also provides the hearer with a distinct musical difference in relation to the Gospel. Affectively the eighth mode has been described by Luther as "serious." Other musical theorists have described it as the *modus sapiens* or the mode of wisdom, "not unlike an honest matron who tries to soften and calm the wrath and turmoil of her husband with agreeable discourse."<sup>31</sup> Again, to what extent the Lutheran congregation members were conscious of these affects is not noted by Luther. It is enough that he and his collaborative musicians recognized the role of the affects in music for the evangelical mass.

Musicians [like Luther] believed that the modes furnished a number of differently structured sets of coherent musical relationships each of which had its own set of expressive characteristics *that could naturally and of themselves reinforce the affective sense of a verbal text* [emphasis added].<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, the affective power of music was a power set within Christ.

Everything depends on the article of Christ, and everything is involved in it. Whoever has this article has everything...<sup>33</sup>

Carrying this hermeneutical function of the modal affects further, Luther sets the order of the *Deutsche Messe* to specific modes. There is a musical symmetry surrounding the Gospel, and the *Verba Testamenti* (the "Words of Institution" of the Lord's Supper, which is also pure Gospel in Luther's Christological estimation) both

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<sup>31</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary*, Vol. 16, p. 799.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 797. Despite Luther's criticism of speculative (*speculativa*) music theory, his musical education would have included some discussion of the extra-musical nature of the modes. See *The New Grove Dictionary*, Vol. 16, p. 798.

<sup>33</sup> Martin Luther in a comment on John 16:3; see Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 24, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 14-16*, trans. Martin H. Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 319.



set in the fifth mode, the mode of joy.

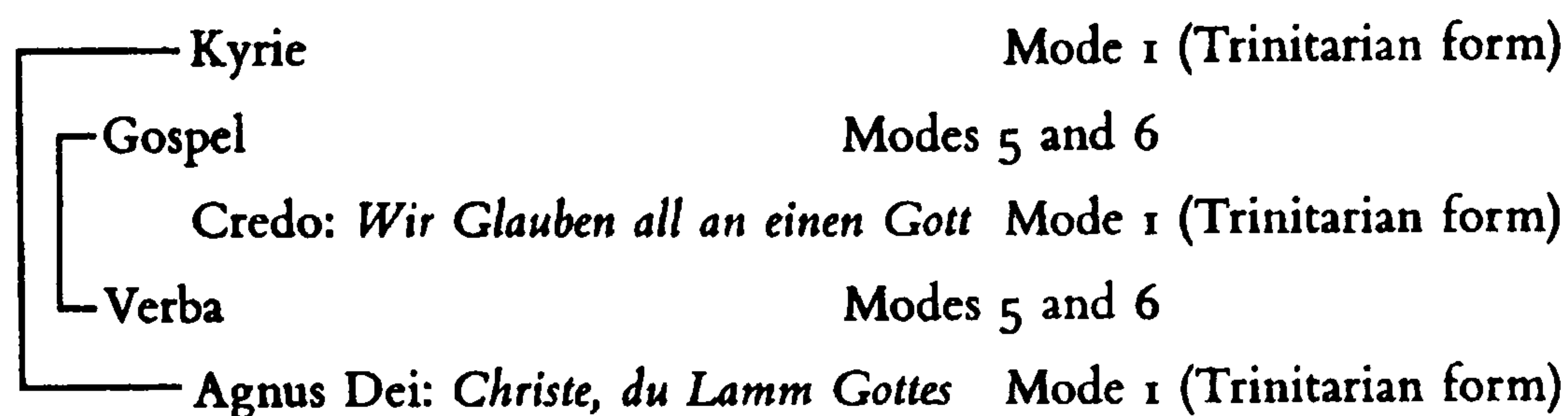


Figure 3 Luther's musical symmetry to emphasize the Gospel in his *Deutsche Messe*

At the center of his order Luther draws the worshiper's attention to the center of the Christian faith, the Gospel and the *Verba*, by means of the musical setting and its affect (*Fig. 3*). Then as if to draw further attention to this modal center in Christ, Luther sets other texts in the first mode. The first or Dorian mode "has the liveliest melody of all, arouses the somnolent, refreshes the sad and disturbed...the foremost musicians use this mode the most."<sup>34</sup> As though to heighten the joy of the Gospel and as a symbolic expression of his own appreciation for *figural* or polyphonic music, the Kyrie, the Creedal hymn and the Agnus Dei are each set to the Dorian mode. Each of these three portions of the order is set in a three-fold manner. The Kyrie is a simple three-fold form. The Creedal hymn is *Wir glauben all* in three stanzas, as is also the vernacular Agnus Dei, *Christe, du Lamm Gottes*, a three stanza hymn.

Evidence of Luther's continuing appreciation for the modal/affective symmetry of his *Deutsche Messe* can be seen in later editions, 1529 and 1533 (*Fig. 4*, next page). In these later additions he adds an Introit based upon Psalm 34 to precede the Kyrie. This too is set to the first mode, likewise drawing attention to the Gospel and the

<sup>34</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary*, Vol. 16, p. 799.



Lord’s Supper by its text (“O taste and see that the Lord is good”<sup>35</sup>) and its mode. To balance this addition at the beginning of the *Deutsche Messe* Luther appends Psalm 34 after the Agnus Dei during the communion. The text of this Psalm, “He has instituted a memorial of his wonders,” and its setting in the first mode point back to the Gospel and Lord’s Supper.

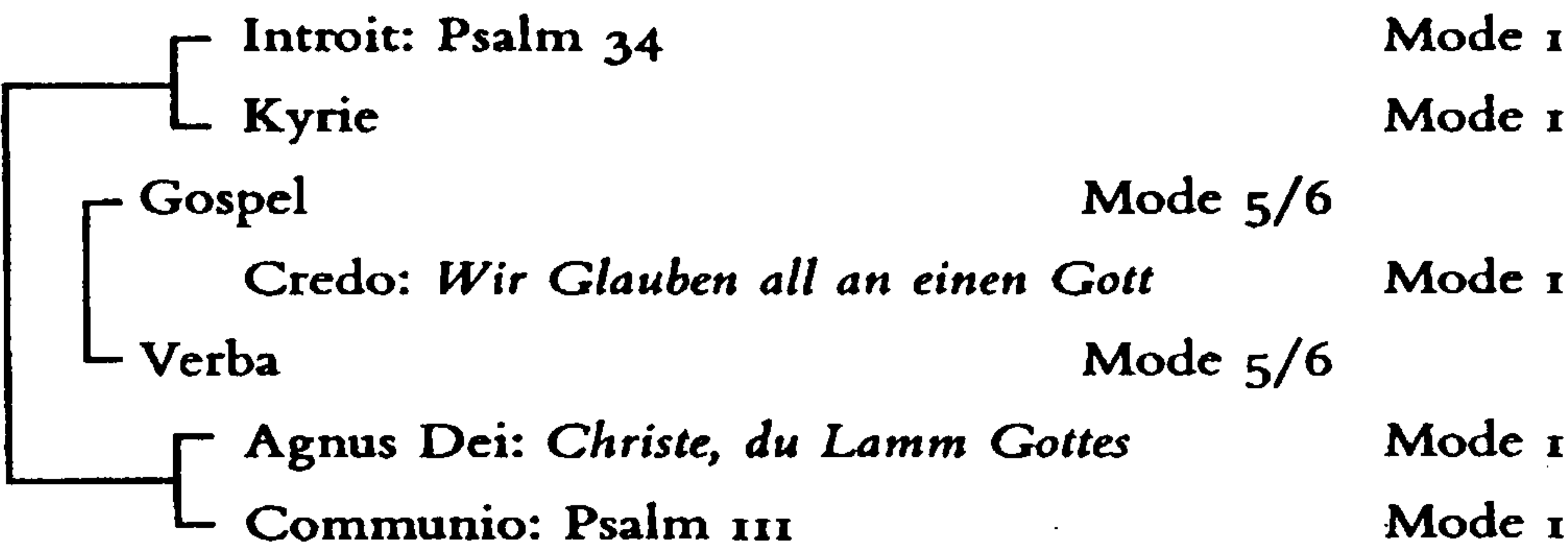


Figure 4 Luther’s additional editing of his *Deutsche Messe*

From Luther’s reform of the Divine Service, coupled with his hymns texts, adaptations and praise of music’s art, one may clearly see that “sing and saying” the Gospel was of high priority to him for the sake of the Church. Luther’s musical colleague, Johann Walter, set to poetry the Reformer’s thoughts on music and his creative care and craft in setting the texts of the Divine Service.

For music and theology  
Were given by God concurrently.  
The former with its lovely sound  
Was in the latter hidden found.  
God let his peace on both arise  
So that each might the other prize.  
To closest friendship they have grown;  
They are as loving sisters known.  
When God's Word lives in human heart,  
One finds there harmony's sweet art  
In which there is the Spirit's love,  
The proof it came from God above.

<sup>35</sup> In Luther’s German translation of the Bible he renders the final word “sweet” rather than “good.”



No other arts with it compare,  
 For it breathes purest Gospel air,  
 Exalting Holy Writ on high  
 And earning highest praise thereby.<sup>36</sup>



Figure 5 *Musica* from Walter's poem,  
*Lob und Preis der himmlischen Kunst Musica*, 1564

### *Johann Walter—The Clear Proclamation of the Gospel in Music*

Johann Walter (1496-1570) has the distinction of being the first Lutheran kantor. This distinction comes to him not only because of his collaborative work with Martin Luther in the musical setting of the *Deutsche Messe*, but also because Walter was the first to take Luther's principles on music in the Church into the creative task of

<sup>36</sup> Johann Walter, "Lob und Preis der löblichen Kunst Musica" (1538), trans. F. Samuel Janzow, in Carl Schalk, *Music in Early Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), p. 189. Walter wrote a second poem in 1564, similar yet with additional comments, entitled, "Lob und Preis der himmlischen Kunst Musica." For a thorough exegesis of these poems in relation to Luther's and Walter's thoughts on theology and music, see Walter Blankenburg, *Johann Walter: Leben und Werk* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider Verlag, 1991), pp. 365-384.



composing hymn tunes for congregational singing and of crafting music for choirs in Lutheran congregations and schools.

Johann Walter has not enjoyed the fame to which he is entitled. He shares with others the fate of those who are overshadowed by a Titan.... No other composer of his day dedicated his talents so completely to Martin Luther and his reformational program as did Johann Walter. This self-surrender was grounded in profound inner convictions and was fed by faith in the Lutheran cause which was exceptionally virile.... [He concentrates] all his efforts on the composition and dissemination of music for the evangelical Church.<sup>37</sup>

This encomium to Walter by a learned admirer would seem to imply that to know Walter's music would be to know Luther's mind on the subject. This is true up to a point. For Walter was not only Luther's musical interpreter, he was a gifted theological thinker and composer in his own right.

Before his invitation from Luther to assist in the work on the *Deutsche Messe*, Walter had already released the collection for which he is best known, the *Geistliche Gesangbüchlein* of 1524. The collection contains thirty-eight settings of thirty hymns, twenty-three of which were written by Martin Luther. Among them are settings based on two of the three *leisen* Luther mentions in his *Formula Missae: Gott sei gelobet* and *Nun bitten wir*. The *Gesangbüchlein* went through several editions<sup>38</sup> and served as the model for subsequent collections in the Reformation era.

All but two of the settings in this collection of Walter's are *cantus-firmus* compositions in three to five voices, with the melody set in the tenor voice.<sup>39</sup> Walter's

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<sup>37</sup> Otto Schröder, "Foreword," trans. Walter Buszin, *Johann Walter, Sämtlich Werke, Bd. I* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1955), p. ix.

<sup>38</sup> 1524, 1525, 1537, 1554, 1551.

<sup>39</sup> The *cantus-firmus* style of polyphonic composition follows a scheme where "the traditional melody was placed with its text in the tenor part of a composition for four or more voices, in the middle of lower part of two- or three-voice pieces, and, more rarely, in the upper part (in this case 'tenor' designates less the voice range than the principle of 'holding fast' [*firmus*] to one voice as a foundation, as the primary



practice of using the chorale tunes as the *cantus-firmus* of his musical settings established this compositional style as a distinguishing mark of Lutheran Church music.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Walter's collaborative work with Luther can easily lead to the conclusion that Walter's settings are reflective of Luther's thought. Yet so close was their work together that Luther's thought on the subject of music may also be



Figure 6 From a *cantus-firmus* motet by Johan Walter; notice the interpretive, ascending lines on the word *resurrectio*.

reflections of Walter's compositional skill. Luther wrote:

...at last it is possible to taste with wonder (yet not to comprehend) God's absolute and perfect wisdom in his wondrous work of music. Here it is most remarkable that one single voice continues to sing the tenor, while at the same time many other voices play around it, exulting and adorning it in exuberant strains and, as it were, leading it forth in a divine roundelay, so that those who are the least bit moved know nothing more amazing in this world. But any who remain unaffected are unmusical indeed and deserve to hear...the music of pigs.<sup>41</sup>

The form of the *cantus-firmus* polyphony is, for Luther and Walter, a musical expression of the Gospel itself.

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element of the piece, in relation to which the added voices play subordinate roles).” Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, p. 73.

<sup>40</sup> Walter E. Buszin, “Johann Walther, Composer, Pioneer, and Luther's Musical Consultant,” *The Musical Heritage of the Church*, No. 3, ed. Theodore Hoelty-Nickel (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University, 1946), p. 101.

<sup>41</sup> *Luther's Works*, Vol. 53, p. 324.



As noted in the previous section (see pages 13-14) Luther perceived a profound connection between the proclamation of the Gospel by the spoken Word and this proclamation by means of music wedded with the Word of Gospel. Walter set this Lutheran insight to poetic expression in his poem, *Lob und Preis der löblichen Kunst Musica*, of 1538:

For music and theology  
 Were given by God concurrently.  
 The former with its lovely sound  
 Was in the latter hidden found.<sup>42</sup>

The eminent Walter biographer, Walter Blankenburg, concluded that there is nothing in Walter's expressions on the subject that echo Luther's Law-Gospel understanding of music in connection with the doctrine of the justification of the sinner before God by grace, through faith for Christ's sake.<sup>43</sup> This is a startling, yet incorrect, conclusion. Blankenburg's assessment comes from a rather narrow forensic understanding of the Lutheran doctrine of justification which emphasizes the Christ *pro nobis* at the expense of the Christ *in nobis*.

In his 1538 poem, Walter declared:

That such unmerited free grace  
 (Which God from love for all our race  
 Had promised in His Word) might be  
 Kept fresh in human memory  
 And move the heart to high delight  
 In praising God both day and night—  
 This is the weightiest reason why  
 God music did at once supply.<sup>44</sup>

The Word of grace, of Gospel, of forgiveness in Christ, is known in music as music is

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<sup>42</sup> Rhyme pair 41 & 42. *Johann Walter, Sämtlich Werke, Bd. 6* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1973), p. 154. Translated by F. Samuel Janzow. 1983.

<sup>43</sup> Blankenburg. *Johann Walter*, p. 380.

<sup>44</sup> Rhyme pairs 24-27 (28). *Johann Walter, Sämtlich Werke, Bd. 6*, p. 154.

known in that Word. Yet there is more to music than a remembrance of God's grace.

Walter also expresses a sacramental nature of music's grace—a grace by union with the Word—which echoes the ancient understanding of the Lord's Supper as a φάρμακον αθανασίας, a medicine of immortality.<sup>45</sup> As the sacramental Word in the Lord's Supper has a salutary benefit, so too that Word in music has a medicinal purpose.

There's health in music it contains  
The therapy for ills and pains.<sup>46</sup>

This excerpt from the 1538 poem is further elaborated in Walter's poem, *Lob und Preis der himmlischen Kunst Musica*, of 1564. In this 1564 work, expressing his praise for music, the Kantor declared:

One clearly hears that music is  
Of God, a medicine of His.  
All aches and melancholy's pain  
In music's art true healing gain.  
Its cheerfulness makes sorrow flee  
That we praise God eternally.

A power beyond compare is here,  
In music's art a draught so dear  
Of sweetness, joy and friendliness  
Concealed within its artful dress.  
A claret cannot taste so sweet  
When once one's ears with music meet.<sup>47</sup>

Blankenburg concludes that Walter is drawn more toward the natural power of music to soothe, rather than by the Gospel's healing power set within music as Luther

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<sup>45</sup> The phrase comes from Ignatius of Antioch in his letter to the Ephesians: see *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. J. B. Lightfoot & J. R. Harmer, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992). This phrase concerning the Lord's Supper would be quoted frequently by Lutherans in the centuries to come.

<sup>46</sup> Rhyme pair 123, *Johann Walter, Sämtlich Werke*, Bd. 6, p. 155.

<sup>47</sup> Strophe 30 & 31, *Johann Walter, Sämtlich Werke*, Bd. 6, p. 158. The rhymed English translations of



suggests.<sup>48</sup> Given the close collaboration between Luther and Walter this conclusion is not satisfactory. A more satisfying conclusion is that Walter is expressing the musical ramification of the union with Christ that comes by the Word in faith. The Christ whose body and blood is a “medicine of immortality” in the sacramental Word of the Lord’s Supper is the same healing Christ whose very presence absolves by the proclaimed Word.

It is the self-same Christ who heals by the Word and music of the Church’s song. Walter is giving expression to the efficacy of the divine Word in music. At the same time the *genus apotelesmaticum* is implied in this view. According to this doctrine both the human and divine natures of Christ participate in the salvific acts of the God-man Christ. So the Word with music accomplishes its purposes according to the natures of both Word and music.

This conclusion is supported by Walter’s further development of his thoughts in the 1564 poem. The justified sinner, united with Christ, by means of the musical Word is united with the host of heaven by the same Christ present in His Word in music.

A woven wreath is music’s stance,  
 In truth it is a heavenly dance.  
 With sweetness clear, each voice now sings  
 In mirrored joy; shared blessing springs,  
*Concordia* and *Charitas*,  
 In greatest measure, without loss.

Within this dance one now may hear  
 The finest fugues, with chorales clear.  
 Each voice pursues most artfully  
 Its fellow voice, and turns in glee.

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Walter’s 1564 poem are my own.

<sup>48</sup> Blankenburg, *Johann Walter*, pp. 380-381.

United, singing highest praise,  
They all to God their voices raise.

My high delight, a *Cantorei*,  
A joyful, well-voiced *Symphonei*,  
Where joy and beauty, hand in hand,  
Sound forth amid the glorious band.  
Kantors all, God's Word to share  
By music's grace, both here and there.<sup>49</sup>

This understanding of the music of earth united together with the music of heaven, united by the communion of saints with Christ, will receive further development and expression in the next generation of Lutheran composers, especially with Michael Praetorius and Heinrich Schütz. In this view the *genus maiestaticum* is also implied. As the human nature participates in the glory of the divine nature in Christ, so the earth-bound saints participate in the glory of the heavenly saints through the divine-human Christ.

Within the unity of heaven and earth by the music of the Gospel, Walter perceives an eschatological dimension. Although this eschatological dimension is hidden in music's sometimes-lowly state—as God's glory is hidden in Christ and as the divine nature in Christ participates in His human nature according to the *genus tapeinotikon*—even in its lowliness the glory of God shines within music by the presence of Christ. In the 1538 poem Walter wrote,

Music ever walks with God  
Surpassing all the arts that plod.  
In heaven alone it's rightly weighed  
When in the judgment scales it's laid.  
Cramped here below in husks and shells,  
Unmuffled there like steeple bells.  
No further need in heaven to harp  
On grammar fine and logic sharp;

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<sup>49</sup> Strophes 25-27, *Johann Walter: Sämtlich Werke, Bd. 6*, p. 158.



Geometry, astronomy,  
Law, medicine, philosophy,

All doused, and even rhetoric,  
While music beams from candlestick.  
'Herr Kantor' every saint will be  
And shine as music's devotee.<sup>50</sup>

Given such an exalted and a Christologically rich expression of music's art, Walter's own compositions for Luther's liturgical reform exhibit a marked economy of style and restraint that stand in antithesis to his words of praise. Theologically speaking one could conclude that Walter is expressing a hiddenness of the glory of God, the glory of music's greatness hidden within the compactness of Walter's style. Practically speaking Walter is working under the constraints of Luther's liturgical reforms, particularly Luther's desire that the Divine Service not last much longer than an hour. This time limit did not allow for extensively developed music in choral singing. Luther's liturgical reform was inspired by the clarity of Scripture and its need to be clearly proclaimed. The efficacy of proclamation by music was directly related to the perspicuity of an economy in compositional style. Walter's *cantus-firmus* motets mirror that efficacious perspicuity of the Word.

It is this compact clarity in Walter's compositions for the Divine Service that has led some to conclude, wrongly, that Walter was not as gifted in his own musical compositions as he was in setting Luther's hymns or portions of the evangelical mass.

It is very doubtful whether Luther approved of Walter's policy [of musical efficacy and perspicuity in compact forms] wholeheartedly. In fact, his fondness for the music of Josquin Després, also his silence concerning the compositions (not the musicianship) of Walter would incline one to believe that Luther approved more readily of a more interesting and more vital type of music [than that of his colleague.

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<sup>50</sup> Rhyme pairs 145-151, *Johann Walter, Sämtlich Werke*, Bd. 6, p. 156.



Walter].<sup>51</sup>

History set Walter within two great shadows in which to carry out his creative work. The first was the long shadow cast by Martin Luther. The second was that of Josquin Després. Nevertheless despite, or more accurately because of, these twin shadows (Walter's "cross"), his contributions are the more startling. To read his own words and to sing his own compositions one is struck by the realization that this man, Walter, very Luther-like shines by his hiddenness in those shadows.

Prima vox  
Discantus

Be - a - ti - im - ma - cu - la - ti

Fuga quatuor vocum in unisono.  
Quaelibet post duo tempora.

Secunda vox  
Tenor (I)

Be - a - ti im - ma - cu - la - ti in vi -

Tertia vox  
Altus

Vi - vat, vi - vat, vi - vat,

Quarta vox  
Tenor (II)

Be - a - ti im - ma - cu - la -

Sexta vox  
Tenor (III)

Be - a - ti im -

Septima vox  
Tenor (IV)

Quinta vox  
Bassus

Vi - ve Lu - the - re, Vi - ve Me - lan - thon, Vi - vi - te no - strae

Figure 7 A 1544 setting of Psalm 119 in which Walter incorporates praise for the Wittenberg Reformers in the bass voice: "Vive Luthere, Vive Melan[ch]thon."

Walter's straight-forward musical settings of Scriptural texts served well within the context for which he wrote them: school choirs. Kantor Walter taught the school boys of Torgau their Lutheran theology as well as their music by means of singing the *cantus-firmus* compositions that flowed from his pen. What the boys learned in the school they sang for the congregation.

<sup>51</sup> Buszin, "Johann Walther," *Musical Heritage*, p. 100.



It is this care to teach the evangelical Lutheran faith by means of singing that Walter extended into his work with the Torgau community choir, the *Kantorei*, thereby being established in history as Lutheranism's first kantor. People of various stations in life were brought together to sing; to sing Lutheran theology. It was also understood that singing in the *Kantorei* established desirable social values through the attributes of music.

No other art on earth compares  
 With sounding forth celestial airs.  
 It quells emotions that annoy  
 And opens wide the springs of joy.  
 It lifts the heart to rise for prayer  
 And with rejoicing fills the air.  
 It tunes the spirit to the chord  
 That bonds faith to the living Word.  
 The warrior's courage it inspires,  
 Beasts hush to listen to its lyres...  
 Oft music's power can defeat  
 A raging anger's rising heat.<sup>52</sup>

For Walter the Lutheran kantor, conscious of his calling in the Church, these benefits of music spring not from the natural power of music itself but from the union of music with the Gospel; more so, from union with the Christ who gives new life. In an undated comment, around 1538, Walter noted,

Music is an art given by God that man should therewith praise and extol His grace and mercy. Thereby the Spirit of God joyfully awakens man's foul, encumbered flesh to sing God's praise and to enter into joyful service.<sup>53</sup>

When not limited to the constraints of the school or the Divine Service Walter composed artistically rich Passion settings and Latin compositions. It was Luther's contention that the German vernacular required the compact musical style, while the

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<sup>52</sup> Rhyme pairs 115-119, 122. *Johann Walter, Sämtlich Werke, Bd. 6*, p. 155.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Blankenburg, *Johann Walter*, p. 427.







how all available artistic means are used according to a fixed plan and with alteration, one gains the impression that Johann Walter prepared these settings with an unusual amount of love and that they represent the apex of his art.<sup>54</sup>

Johann Walter, so deeply attached to Luther as to deem him a father, focused his creative energies on teaching the faith and music together by means of his compositions. By this the Lutheran Church's first kantor placed his stamp on Lutheran Church music to come.

[Walter's] devotion to his subject is always two-fold: attentively maintaining the purity of the Gospel, and caring for the art of *musica*. Both appeared to him as non-relinquishable and indispensable, because the Gospel and music were inseparable. These two comprised his activity as kantor, that music in its divine voice would not suffer but rather be much more effectively promoted.<sup>55</sup>

Or as Walter envisioned his vindication: "In eternity, in the eternal blessedness, there will be nothing but kantors!"<sup>56</sup>

#### *Georg Rhau—The Form of the Freedom of the Gospel in Music*

If Johann Walter, devoted disciple of Luther and the Reformation cause, is the voice of the compact, perspicacious style of Lutheran church music, Georg Rhau, devoted disciple of Martin Luther and the Lutheran cause, is the voice advocating the development of music's art to the greatest extent possible.

Rhau had become the initiator of Luther's church music. He was among those who recognized the claims of the theologians of Wittenberg, who demanded that church music serve the purpose of proclaiming the Christian faith. Beyond this limitation, however,

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<sup>54</sup> Otto Schröder, "Vorwort," trans. Walter E. Buszin, *Johann Walter Sämtlich Werke, Bd. 5* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1961), no page number given.

<sup>55</sup> Blankenburg, *Johann Walter*, p. 383.

<sup>56</sup> Walter in the "Vorrede" to his 1556 collection of *Magnificat* settings. See Blankenburg, *Johann Walter*, p. 437.



Rhau, whose training had made of him a humanist and a very well informed musician, followed his own insights. He followed them not only into the historical foundations of all cultic expression, but likewise into music as an art the full value of which is determined in part also by the laws and standards of the science of aesthetics. Rhau sought to enrich the purely theological aspect through the addition of points of view which he had derived from both his cognition of the value and power of tradition and from his insights into the autonomy of music as an art.<sup>57</sup>

To conclude, above, that Rhau valued the “autonomy of music” is a misleading conclusion. For Rhau music as art was not strictly autonomous. He intended to explore the full freedom of music’s art as art and yet, simultaneously, music’s art lived in service to the Gospel. Like the doctrine of the communication of attributes (*communicatio idiomatum*), the sharing of Christ’s attributes between His divine nature and human nature without confusing those natures nor dividing the one person, so music and theology, in Rhau’s estimation, communicated their attributes, one with the other without confusion or division. As the Gospel must be fully and truly Gospel to communicate its attributes in Walter’s music, so music’s art must be fully and truly art to communicate its attributes in Rhau’s theology.

Rhau, who had previously served as a kantor in pre-Reformation St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, made his appearance in the Lutheran musical world as a publisher in Wittenberg. He published Walter’s *Geistliche Gesangbüchlein* in 1524. In 1538 Rhau added to his reputation by publishing his own collection of music for the Lutheran Church entitled, *Symphoniae jucundae* (“Delightful Symphonies”). It is a significant collection of music for it provides examples of music in the early life of the Lutheran Church which may be taken as embodying the Lutheran confession of the

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<sup>57</sup> Inge-Maria Schröder. “Foreword.” trans. Walter E. Buszin. *Georg Rhau Musikdrucke, Bd. I, Resinarius Responsoriorum* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1955), p. xi.



Gospel—embodied in the music, if not specifically embodied in the texts.



Figure 9 *Frau Musica* from Georg Rhau's *Symphoniae iucundae*, 1538

Martin Luther's fervent appreciation for the music of Josquin Després was reflected in Rhau.

What is law [*lex*] doesn't make progress, but what is gospel [*evangelium*] does. God has preached the gospel through music, too, as may be seen in Josquin, *all of whose compositions* [emphasis added] flow freely, gently, and cheerfully, are not forced or cramped by rules, and are like the song of the finch ['finch' is perhaps a play on the name of another Luther favorite, Heinrich Finck].<sup>58</sup>

Josquin is a master of the notes, which must express what he desires; on the other hand, other choral composers must do what the notes dictate.<sup>59</sup>

The "freely, gently, cheerfully flowing" music is in its very form the proclamation of the Gospel, not despite the text nor because of the text but because the text of the Gospel and the musical setting are so closely woven together. It is an

<sup>58</sup> December, 1531, in Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 54, *Table Talk*, ed. & trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 130.



expression of what Luther called *die rechte Art*. The music sounds what the text declares, while the text expresses what the music sounds. As in the proclaimed text, so in the musical proclamation there is a striving for proper *accent* and *concent*. *Accent* is the excitation of human feelings, while *concent* is the harmony of those emotions. As Luther notes, the *lex* cannot make progress, it only demands and kills both *accent* and *concent*. *Evangelium* progresses; it brings life, prospering and nurturing faith by means of the Word and music together.

Rhau put his printing presses at Wittenberg to work publishing collections of music that combined examples of finely crafted music (music with proper *accent* and *concent*) together with a pedagogical approach. Rhau's pedagogy allowed his collections to be used to lead students from the simple to the complex in music, and to impart maturity in their grasp of music's interpretation of the divine Word of Scripture.

Rhau's *Symphoniae jucundae* exhibits this practice. It is also an important collection because the foreword was penned by Martin Luther. Luther's preface has been widely used as the most thorough explication of his own views on music. It is within Luther's preface that the musical significance of Rhau's collection is explained. At first glance the *Symphoniae*, with its fifty-two polyphonic motets representing a broad spectrum of known and anonymous composers, might be taken for a collection of compositions for each Sunday of the church year.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Luther, quoted in Schalk, *Music in Early Lutheranism*, p. 21.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. the introductory comments in *Luther's Works*, Vol. 53, p. 321. "Because of the scarcity of new editions and the serious problems which result from a lack of proper source materials, even Blume inadvertently erred as to the content and character of Rhau's *Symphoniae jucundae*...Blume concludes: '52 motets for the 52 Sundays of the church year.'" Quoted in Hans Albrecht, "Foreword" *Rhau, Musikdrucke, Bd. III Symphoniae jucundae* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1959), p. xi. Blume made this conclusion in 1931. In 1974 he had revised his assessment: "the motets could, of course, be used on occasion in the service, in school, and for household music." Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, p. 118.



Luther's preface to the *Symphoniae jucundae* provides a clue to the collection's purpose. He identifies himself as a *musicae studioso*, a student of music. Luther's own gifted amateur abilities in music made him both a strong advocate for music in the life of the Church as well as an enthusiastic participant in music making at a number of venues, chiefly at his home in the former Augustinian monastery in Wittenberg. In this light the Reformer declares in his preface to Rhau's *Symphoniae*:

...but when [musical] learning is added to all this [*i.e.*, to the Word of God and human language] and artistic music [*Musica artificialis*] which corrects, develops and refines the natural music, then at last it is possible to taste with wonder (yet not to comprehend) God's absolute and perfect wisdom in his wondrous work of music [*opere suo mirabili Musicae*].<sup>61</sup>

Notice in the preceding quotation how the Lutheran Christological method is implied in the Reformer's comments. Lutheranism begins with the God-Man Christ, and from this Christ learns to speak most truly about the Divine and also learns to speak most truly about the human. Both God and humanity are known by the God-Man Christ. So too in Luther's comments, "the wondrous work of music" is that the Word inhabited music (as also the musically "enfleshed" Word) allows one "to taste with wonder" both the divine Word and the music of earth ("the natural music").

Here it is most remarkable that one single voice continues to sing the tenor, while at the same time many other voices play around it, exulting and adorning it in exuberant strains and, as it were, leading it forth in a divine roundelay, so that those who are the least bit moved know nothing more amazing in this world.<sup>62</sup>

The approach is not from music to God, nor from God to music, but rather from the starting point of Christ in a *Verbum musica* (a *musica Christi*) both God and music

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<sup>61</sup> *Luther's Works*, Vol. 53, p. 324.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*



are more fully known.

Luther thoroughly enjoyed music making with colleagues and students at his home in Wittenberg. His comments in the Rhau preface concerning the savoring of God's wisdom in music need not be confined to the music of the Lutheran *Gottesdienst*, but might also be tasted in the social conversation of music making, whether that music is sacred or secular. This conclusion is warranted when one examines the musical works, both sacred and secular, which Rhau includes in his *Symphoniae*.



Figure 9 Josquin's motet, *In te, Domini, speravi*, the first in Rhau's collection, perhaps as a tribute to Martin Luther. The motet was one of Luther's favorites.

The first of the compositions, holding a place of honor, is a work by Josquin Després, Luther's declared favorite composer. While Josquin's motet, *In te, Domini, speravi* (Fig. 9), is a brief work in comparison with his more elaborate compositions, its inclusion in Rhau's collection allows the musical amateur, the *Musicae studioso*, of Lutheran households the opportunity to sing music by this renowned Netherlandish composer. Furthermore, its inclusion as the first of the fifty-two is very likely Rhau's gesture of gratitude to Luther for the preface and for Luther's own enthusiasm for



music.

Rhau's collection of fifty-two works is uniform in that all the compositions are short, yet they come from the creative hands of well-known composers as well as anonymous composers whose works were acclaimed on the contemporary musical scene of 16th century Wittenberg. Both Johann Walter, the composer, and Georg Rhau, the publisher, provided short musical compositions. However, Walter's compact style of composition reflected his attentiveness to the clarity and sufficiency of the Scriptural Word. Rhau's purpose for brevity in the *Symphoniae* is pedagogical. The collection is a step toward apprehending longer, more developed compositions which, by means of their greater compositional development, allowed the maturing student to grasp the faith more deeply.

If the unique character of Rhau's collection [*Symphoniae jucundae*] and above all Luther's foreword prompt one to regard the collection as a model anthology, then one should not ignore the fact that the collection was frankly intended for the social cultivation of music rather than for the cultivation of the high art of the *Kantoreien* and the *Hofkapellen*...until now we have not thoroughly understood the purpose which these anthologies used by Lutherans of the first half of the 16th century were intended to serve.<sup>63</sup>

In the early 1540s Rhau published a number of collections of music for the Order of Vespers that exhibited his desire for the fullest flowering of music in the Lutheran Church. One of these in particular, *Responsoriorum Numero Octoginta De Tempore et Festis iuxta seriuem totius anni* of 1543, a collection of responsories set by Balthasar Resinarius, also represents an early example of the clash between theology and music—more accurately a clash between theologians and musicians—in the early life of the Lutheran Church.

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<sup>63</sup> Albrecht, *Rhau, Musikdrucke, Bd. III*, p. xiv.



The responsory had been an integral part of Vespers since the 6th century Rule of St. Benedict, but in the reform of Vespers at Wittenberg (the 1525 Order for the university chapel) the responsory was eliminated. A rubric noted that responsories may be used on the rare occasion of festive days. This work of reforming the Vespers order was done by Johannes Bugenhagen, parish pastor of the Wittenberg city church, St. Mary's, making him Luther's own pastor as well as a close-working colleague with Luther.

Rhau's publication of the Vesper responsories put him immediately into conflict with Bugenhagen. That both men, Rhau and Bugenhagen, were close friends with Luther made the conflict significant on a personal level. The greater significance, however, was that the conflict marked the first pitting of music and theology against each other in the life of the Lutheran Church.

Rhau had become the initiator of Luther's church music. He was among those who recognized the claims of the theologians of Wittenberg, who demanded that church music serve the purpose of proclaiming the Christian faith. Beyond this limitation, however, Rhau, whose training had made of him a humanist and a very well informed musician, followed his own insights. He followed them not only into the historical foundations of all cultic expression, but likewise into music as an art the full value of which is determined in part also by the laws and standards of the science of aesthetics. Rhau sought to enrich the purely theological aspect through the addition of points of view which he had derived from both his cognition of the value and power of tradition and from his insights into the autonomy of music as an art.<sup>64</sup>

The collection of responsories contained two forewords, one by Rhau and one by Bugenhagen. Their disagreement is carried out in these forewords. While Bugenhagen appreciated the way music could excite the human emotions, he was very cautious toward this aspect of music. Although Bugenhagen the Lutheran theologian



and pastor espoused the Lutheran principle of Christian freedom, his gift for drafting church orders exhibited his tendency toward strictly confining regulations which were to be observed scrupulously.



Figure 10 A responsory for Christmas based on John 1, *Verbum caro factum est* ("The Word became flesh"). Resinarius demonstrates his compositional skill by having the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> voices sing the phrase, *In principio erat Verbum* ("In the beginning was the Word"), followed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> voices singing the phrase, *Et Verbum erat apud Deum* ("And the Word was with God"), finally having all four voices sing the climax together, *Et Deus erat Verbum* ("And the Word was God.").

Consequently for Bugenhagen, although music was useful in teaching and training up the youth in the Holy Scriptures, its usefulness was volatile and must be carefully regulated. It is no surprise, then, that when Rhau's collection of responsories appeared, including a few which lacked an overt Scriptural basis (and in a very few examples contradicted the theology confessed by the Lutheran Church) Bugenhagen's criticism was intense and immediate. Although by the time of publication the

<sup>64</sup> Inge-Maria Schröder, "Foreword," *Rhau, Musikdrucke, Bd. I*, p. xi-xii.



offensive examples had been altered, Bugenhagen still wrote in his foreword,

So as not to cause offense to the devout, unsuitable words in the hymns which concern the saints have been changed, partly by our good friend Baltasar [*i.e.* Resinarius] and partly by the printer [*i.e.* Georg Rhau]. Elsewhere through negligence [Bugenhagen means negligence on Rhau's part] the references to the Presentation of the Virgin Mary has been left in, which will not offend you greatly, for no claims are made here about that presentation.... To admit openly what I feel, I should like hymns for the young to be purer (as far as the words are concerned), so that one might not merely say, 'Here there is nothing bad, nothing opposed to the sacred writings and the faith', but also, 'here is something good from the sacred writings and the Word of God, doctrine, encouragement, consolation, promise, invocation, etc', so that the young might become accustomed by their singing to commit to memory the sacred writings, like the school boys here at Wittenberg, whom we train in a very short and most delightful exercise, when they go twice a day, morning and evening, from school into the church. By this exercise, as though by a game, our young people learn the Holy Bible, so that they return with greater enthusiasm to their scholastic pursuits. For when Music is embellished with holy words, it puts the evil spirit to flight...<sup>65</sup>

Bugenhagen is kinder toward Resinarius ("our good friend") whose music set the texts which offended him than he is toward Rhau ("the printer"). That Resinarius was also a pastor, like Bugenhagen, while Rhau was not, may explain this discrepancy. Still, in Bugenhagen's estimation, the music remains merely something like a spoon of sugar to make the strong medicine of the sacred Scriptures more easily accepted by the youth.

Rhau, in his foreword, defends his publication of these responsories as the preservation of music from the ancient church. In addition, for his defense Rhau points to Balthasar Resinarius (Harzer), a Lutheran pastor and a friend of both Rhau and Bugenhagen, who set so many of the responsories. If Pastor Resinarius accepted the texts, Rhau suggests, why should Bugenhagen object?

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<sup>65</sup> Johannes Bugenhagen. "Studiosis adolescentibus" ["To the devoted young men"], *Rhau*.



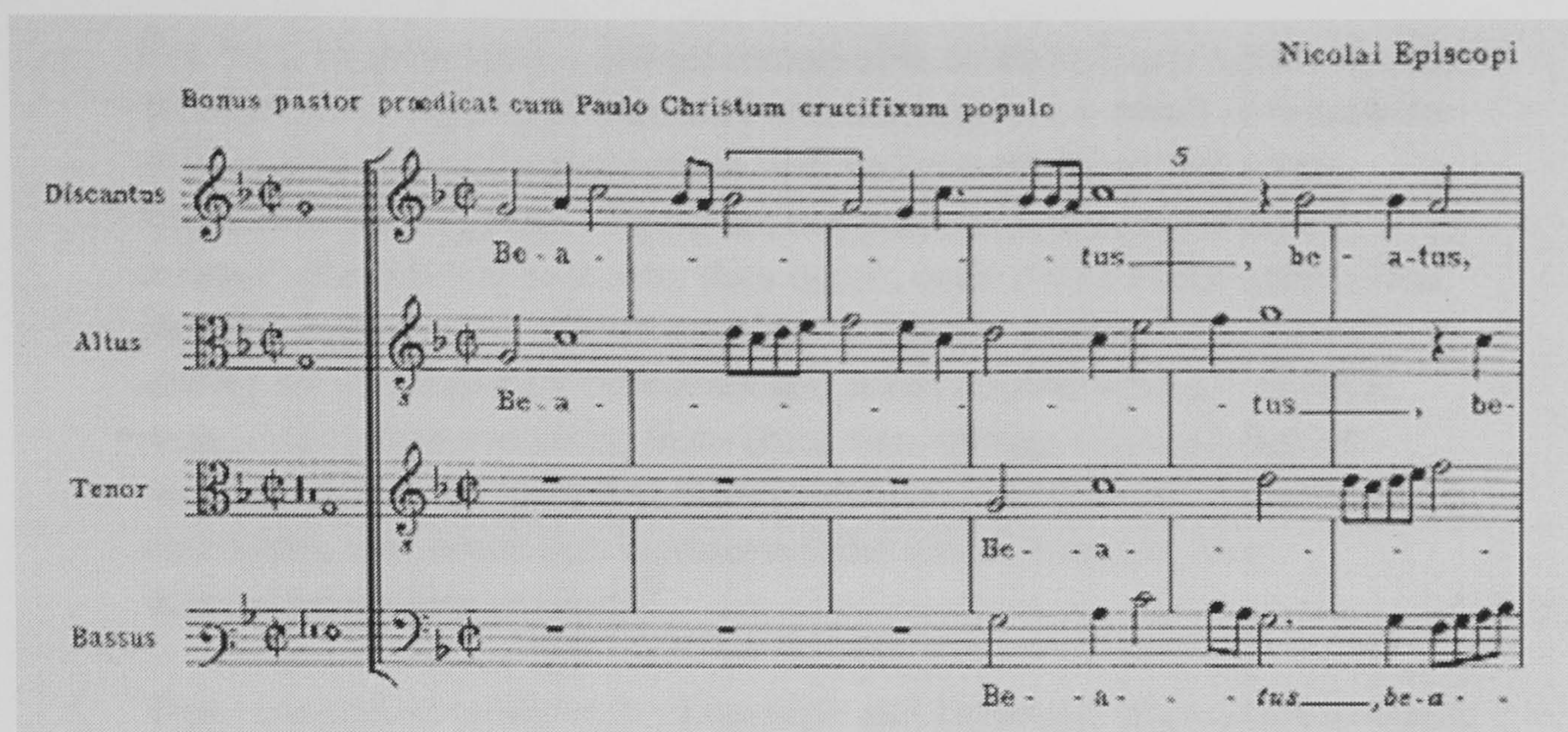


Figure 11 One of the “offending” Resinarius responsaries, for St. Nicholas Day. Rhau amends the “offense” by adding the comment at the beginning that Nicholas was “the good pastor/shepherd who preached with Paul Christ crucified for the people.”

Rhau’s theologically informed view of music’s art appears to go so far that even if a musical text blurred the Scriptural basis of the Gospel or contradicted the Scriptures, the music itself, which was set with that text, was capable of providing the needed correction. If the music exhibited the *accent* and *concent* of the Gospel, that music would accomplish what the text failed to do. If a Gospel-inhabited music could “correct, develop and refine the natural music,” as Luther had recognized (see page 33), Rhau seems to conclude that the Gospel-inhabited music, which formed the core of his collection of responsories, could correct, develop and refine texts which erred from the Gospel revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Philipp Melanchthon, close friend and fellow reformer with Rhau and Luther, author of the defining Augsburg Confession and acclaimed *Preceptor Germania*, noted in a preface to an earlier Rhau collection, *Selectae Harmoniae de Passione Domini*, 1538,



For the soul possesses a certain remarkable relationship [*cognatio*] with numbers [*i.e.*, rhythm, meter, etc] and harmony, as a result of which the soul eagerly listens to harmonies, and various emotions within us respond to their variety. These are not perceived in some obscure manner; there is a reason why they occur, even if this is not understood. But the soul is a sort of harmony [*harmonicum quiddam est anima*], and by its very nature it perceives and loves numbers [again, rhythm, meter, etc] and harmonies; from these two springs a knowledge of order, which is the most beautiful [*pulchrius*] thing in all concerns and characters, and when this is observed the soul is brought to an acknowledgement of God.<sup>66</sup>

This recognition of the role of number and harmonic proportion in music reflects Rhau's and Melanchthon's humanism put into the service of church music. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Boethius had noted

The harmonic proportion to something has related aspects of [arithmetic and geometric proportions] because it has an attitude of proportion not only in its terms alone or in their differences alone, but commonly in both.... The relation to another thing is properly a consideration of harmonic proportion.... Of those musical consonances which they call symphonies, you will find practically all the ratios of the harmonic medial proportion [*i.e.*, the balanced proportion of equals].<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Phillipp Melanchton, "Christiano Lectori Salutem," *Rhau, Musikdrucke, Bd. X, Selectae harmoniae de Passione Domini, 1538* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1990), p. xviii. This collection of passion settings, though not achieving the impact Rhau must have hoped, nevertheless represents a significant contribution to his conception of Lutheran church music. Wolfgang Reich observes in his introduction to the Bärenreiter edition, "Not only is it the first instance of a Protestant plenary mass, a genre given a prominent position in Rhau's design, but it is also, as far as we know, the sole surviving mensural adaptation of the corresponding mass formula. According to Roman rite this formula...was in no case permitted to be celebrated in Holy Week, and as a votive mass it must have appeared suspect to a Lutheran understanding of the liturgy [one thinks of Bugenhagen]. Rhau, ignoring both the Roman tradition and potential Reformational misgivings, turns this mass into the liturgical keystone of his first collection.... He acted according to the Lutheran precept: '*Alleluia enim vox perpetua est Ecclesiae, sicut perpetua est memoria passionis et victoriae eius*' ['Indeed Alleluia is the perpetual voice of the Church, as the continuous memory of His suffering and victory'] (from Luther's *Formula Missae et Communionis*). Wolfgang Reich, trans. J. Bradford Robinson, *Rhau, Musikdrucke, Bd. X*, p. xiv.

<sup>67</sup> Boethius in Michael Masi, *Boethian Number Theory: A Translation of the "De Institutione Arithmetica"* (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1983), p. 177. Of the relationship of this work to Boethius' better known *De Institutione Musica*, Masi comments, "In the work on arithmetic, we find definitions of terms and of proportional principles used to determine the pitches of the musical scale; these are the terms in which the Boethian explanations of harmonies and dissonances must be understood. In the treatise on number theory, Boethius provides the elaborate terminology of proportions which he only briefly reviews in its musical applications in the second treatise [*i.e.*, *De Institutione Musica*]. *Ibid.*, p. 23.



Yet Rhau and Melanchthon did not simply import an ancient theory of harmonic proportion into their thoughts on music. Their recognition of number and harmonic proportion in music was not according to the prescriptions of arithmetically and geometrically defined Law, but rather the proportion and number which arose from the Gospel, the living Word. Melanchthon noted in his preface, “There is a reason why they occur, even if this is not understood.”

Although it is not explicitly stated in any of Melanchthon’s or Rhau’s writings, a Lutheran use of these Boethian principles would be adapted in the light of Lutheran Christology. The ramifications of Lutheran Christology are that numbers and proportion do not open the door to the unseen dimensions of the divine, but rather, since the God-Man Christ is the one by whom all things were made and in whom all things have their being, it is this Christ who reveals Himself in the *harmonia* of number and proportion in music. This Lutheran understanding does not lead to an arithmetic/geometric Christ but rather to a Christological arithmetic/geometry. In the next generation of Lutheran musicians (to be discussed in Chapter 2), Michael Praetorius, Johannes Kepler and Heinrich Schütz, each in his own way, will wrestle with these implications.

One may observe, then, in the conflict over Rhau’s collected responsories that Bugenhagen held the Lutheran *sola scriptura* principle in a narrow way, namely, that the very words of Scripture must be present in the musical works; and only “good” words from Scripture at that: doctrine, encouragement, consolation, promise, invocation, etc. Rhau’s understanding of the *sola scriptura* principle is freer in that the proclamation of the written Word is united with music in order to form and inform the







remainder of the texts is either scriptural or based on legendary texts which contain no concept of supplication to the saints. The mere lack of idolatrous aspects did not satisfy Bugenhagen. He demanded texts with a positive value, and therefore preferred texts taken directly from Scripture. To insure, therefore, that these Responsories would not be misinterpreted, Rhaw indicated the biblical sources for the texts or else the portion of Scripture upon which the Responsory text was based; and for those lacking such a source, he supplied short statements which explained in what sense both the feast and the text were to be understood.<sup>68</sup>

The importance of this publication, therefore, not so much consists in this that it manifests the singular multiplicity of opinions and endeavors which asserted themselves with the circles of Martin Luther, but, above all, in the fact that through its textual alterations, its indications of sources, and through its theological expositions, the publication presents the one and only compromise which Rhau made to express his own determination to preserve the traditional art of the past as well as the forward looking spirit of the Lutheran theologians. The theological spirit of the Lutheran theologians sought to impose new laws upon church music which would give expression to the new insights they had gained.<sup>69</sup>

One may question whether the point of view expressed by Bugenhagen is a “forward looking spirit” as Schröder, the editor for the Bärenreiter edition, suggests in the previous quotation. The imposing of “new laws” to control music is not the “theological spirit of the Lutheran theologians” as reflected in Luther and others: “What is law does not progress, but what is gospel does.”

Music as the gift of God given for human beings to taste His wisdom finds its way, via Rhau’s publications and those of his colleague kantors, into Lutheran church services, into Lutheran schools and their choirs, into Lutheran community singing groups and into the joyful pastime of music making in the Lutheran home. Yet while all the individuals involved unanimously recognized music as a *donum Dei*, they were

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<sup>68</sup> Mattfeld, *Georg Rhaw*, p. 212.

<sup>69</sup> Inge-Marie Schröder. “Foreword.” *Rhau, Musikdrucke, Bd. I*, p. xii-xiii. For a detailed study of the Resinarius responsories see Inge-Maria Schröder, *Die Responsorienvertonungen des Balthasar*



far from unanimous in using this gift. Bugenhagen *et al.* were extremely cautious toward music for the sake of the Gospel, while Rhau *et al.* desired to allow music its fullest freedom in the Gospel. While the former tended to separate music and the Word, the latter envisioned the two closely allied and interdependent. The former guarded music with *lex*. The latter discovered music woven together with *evangelium*. Thus from the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation in Germany, the sisters of Lutheran theology and music (as also theologians and musicians), like Christians themselves who are *simul iustus et peccator*, would know harmony and dissonance. These conflicts continue to haunt the Lutheran Church.

#### *Scandinavia—The Reformation and its Music Moves North*

The Lutheran Reformation moved quickly into the Scandinavian countries on the heels of the Reformation in German Saxony and other German lands. However, while the effect was immediate in some places, notably in the chief cities of Denmark and Sweden, it was very gradual in other areas, notably in rural communities and in most of Norway. While royal edicts of 1527 for the Swedish kingdom and 1536 for the Danish-Norwegian kingdom officially established the Lutheran confession for the Church in these lands, the practical expansion of the Lutheran Reformation occurred as Roman Catholic priests were jailed, expelled or died and were replaced by Lutheran pastors.

The sometimes-conflicted musical expression of Lutheranism in Wittenberg and other parts of Lutheran Germany came to be reflected in the developments within the Scandinavian kingdoms. In some places the Latin elements of the mass were

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*Resinarius* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1954).



retained with their Gregorian melodies (after necessary reform was made in the mass). In some places the Latin portions of the evangelical mass were replaced by congregational hymns, retaining their Gregorian melodies with the vernacular texts or German melodies and Scandinavian folk tunes. The former situation prevailed where schools and choirs participated in the music of the mass. The latter came to pass in the smaller communities of Denmark and Sweden, and in all of Norway.

King Christian III of the Dano-Norwegian kingdom invited the Wittenberg theologians to send someone to work with his chief bishop, Peder Palladius, for the reform of the Church in his kingdom. Johannes Bugenhagen was dispatched to the Danish court in Copenhagen. It was a fateful decision.

Bugenhagen, of whom I know of no musical interest, was very well-known as a practical organizer, and a cautious mixture of old and new probably seemed best to him. Luther's 'Deutsche Messe' was seen in this light to be more radical.<sup>70</sup>

This cautiousness for which Bugenhagen was known, revealed in his criticisms of Georg Rhau's musical publications, set the pattern for the early development of church music in the Danish-Norwegian Church. By employing the tactic Luther discouraged—the use of Latin melodies with vernacular texts—the music of the Church took a clearly subordinate role to the vernacular texts in the services and to the evangelical theology in the new church orders.<sup>71</sup>

The *Malmømesse* of 1528 employed such a pattern. Using Luther's *Formula Missae* of 1526 as its basis the *Malmømesse*, however, set Danish translations of the text of the Ordinary to Gregorian melodies. It was also specified that portions could be

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<sup>70</sup> O. M. Sandvik, *Norsk Kirkemusik* (Kristiania: Steenske Forlag, 1918), p. 42.

<sup>71</sup> See "V. Messehåndbøgenes Melodistof," *Danske Messebøger fra Reformationstiden* (København: J. H. Schultz Forlag, 1959), pp. 132ff for a list of the sources for the music in the Danish mass—Gregorian.



sung in either Danish or Latin.<sup>72</sup> The *Kirkeordinar* of 1537, in which Bugenhagen and Palladius collaborated, followed a similar pattern as the *Malmömesse*. Palladius said of this, “One certainly can find on occasion enough old timbers to build a new house.”<sup>73</sup>

**Register offuer den  
ne Bog.**

\* Waar her staar effter Ziffer tallit it punct (.)  
da mercker det den første side paa bladdit. Men  
naar der staar ij puncter effter Ziffer tallit(:)  
da mercker det den anden side  
paa bladdit.

I.

**Om den Danske Euangeliske  
Messe.**

Introitus.

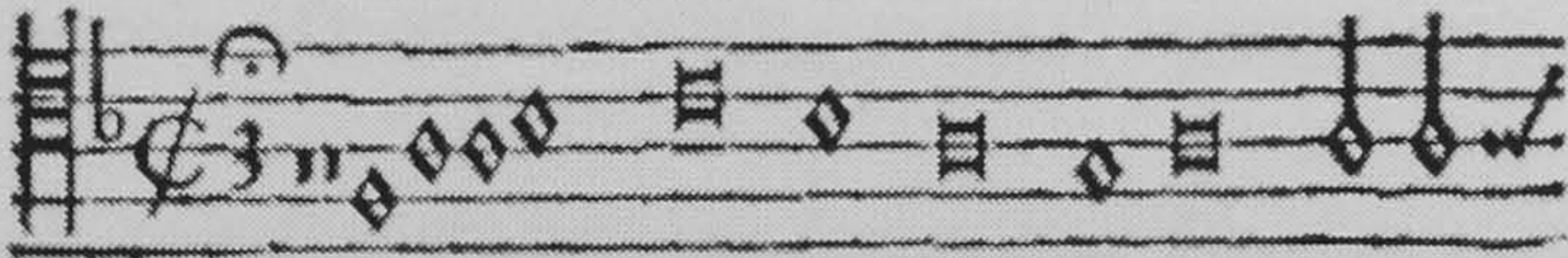
Aff Dybsens nød raaber ieg ic. 178.

\* Eller en anden danske psalme som mest kommer  
offuer Lens met høytiden eller den dags Euangs  
gelio.

Kyrieleison.

\* Fra Christi fødsels høytid indtil Kyndelmisse. 3.  
\* Fra Paaske indtil pindzedag. 92:  
\* I pindzedage / oc siden om Søndagerne oc an-  
dre hellige dage indtil Jull / oc effter Kyndelmisse  
indtil paaske. 99:

**Presien staaendis vend til Alteret/  
begynder Gloria in excelsis Deo ic.  
saaledis.**



**Alleniste Gud i Himmerig / være  
Aaa iij loff**

Figure 13 The opening of the Divine Service for the Danish-Norwegian Church, printed in Hans Thomisson's *Psalmebog*, 1569.

Nevertheless, if the Ordinary of the evangelical mass was a structure of the old

German, Danish and others.

<sup>72</sup> Erik Abrahamsen, *Liturgisk Musik i den Danske Kirke efter Reformationen* (København: Levin & Munksgaards Forlag, 1919), pp. 63-64.



and the new, and not the daring new thing of Luther's tightly crafted music of the *Deutsche Messe*, the role of the congregational hymn carried a significant place in the development of music in the Church of Denmark-Norway. The *Malmömesse*, like Luther's *Formula Missae*, employed congregational hymns before and after the sermon, during the Communion and at the beginning and the end of the service. Hans Thomissøn's *Danske Psalmebog* of 1569 and Niels Jesperssøn's *Gradual* of 1573 laid the foundation for Lutheran congregational singing for the next 100 years.

Thomissøn's *Psalmebog*, which contained 268 hymns with 216 unison tunes, also included an order of service that was hymn based, designed to be used throughout the Kingdom. This order of service included psalm tones and recitation melodies but these were of a pre-Reformation tradition, as Luther's chants outlined in the *Deutsche Messe* were not used in the north countries.<sup>74</sup> Some hymns were written by Thomissøn himself, but most were translations from German hymn collections. He also included a number of Danish folk tunes for the texts.

Jesperssøn's *Gradual* retained many Gregorian melodies with texts set in Latin, sometimes in Danish. There were also some Danish hymns but not as many as in Thomissøn's hymnal. To distinguish the Latin and Danish melodies, the book used black square notes for the Latin-text music and mensural notation<sup>75</sup> for the Danish-text music.

Although the *Gradual* contained a few optional forms of the High Mass liturgy [*høymesseliturgien*, the Lutheran Eucharistic Service]...it is enough to say that it represented a very demanding form of the Divine

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<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Søren Sørensen, *Kirkens Liturgi* (København: Munksgaard, 1952), p. 46.

<sup>74</sup> Torben Schousboe, "Part VII: Protestant Church Music in Scandinavia," *Protestant Church Music*, p. 612.

<sup>75</sup> That is, the modern form of musical notation using notes of fixed rhythmic value.



Service. One can conclude that this High Mass liturgy was sustained only in the larger communities where one had the necessary musical support in a church choir [*i.e.*, a choir of students from the church school].<sup>76</sup>

Concerning the schools, the 1537 Danish *Ordinatio* specified

From Noon until 1:00 the children shall by all means sing, for they must learn to sing not only as a habit [*vane*] but as art [*kunst*], and not only the simple notes but also descant [the more elaborate upper voice of multi-voiced polyphony].<sup>77</sup>

The 1537 *Ordinatio* did not hold such an expectation for education in Norway.

We will with utmost care (*første sørge*) get a superintendent for every diocese in Norway, and give them oversight to do as much as is possible... For on many points they must necessarily hold a different order.<sup>78</sup>

The Reformation in Sweden was colored by violent beginnings—a massacre in Stockholm in 1520, a successful revolution against the Danish crown led by Gustav Vasa, and the ending of the Union of Kalmar that had united Denmark, Norway and Sweden since 1397—and conservative change. When Gustav Vasa was crowned King of Sweden in 1523, he moved the royal court from Uppsala to Stockholm. The king expelled the Roman Catholic Archbishop, confiscated church property and established the brothers Olaus and Laurentius Petri in chief positions for the reformation of the Swedish Church.

As in the Lutheran reformation of the Church in Denmark-Norway, the Swedish reformation employed an evangelical ordering of worship and church life and the use of the vernacular. Translations were made by Olaus Petri of Latin and German

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<sup>76</sup> Nils Grinde, *Norsk Musikkhistorie: Hovedlinjer i norsk musikkliv gjennom 1000 år* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971), p. 39.

<sup>77</sup> *Kirkeordinansen av 1537* (Oslo: Verbum Forlag, 1990), p. 8.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.



hymns for use in worship. He also directed the reform of the order of the mass.<sup>79</sup>



Figure 14 A simple setting of the Kyrie for ordinary Sundays

The first Swedish mass followed the general outline of Luther's *Formula Missae* of 1523, retaining both the Latin texts and Gregorian melodies, but was soon replaced by the evangelical mass order from Nürnberg. Petri noted "the elevation, vestments, the altar and altar paraments, lights and whatever other ceremonies there are [including music]" had a place in the rite "after the pure proclamation of God's Word."<sup>80</sup> He did not hold, as Luther did, that these things—especially music—could be part of that "pure proclamation." As noted previously this order used a vernacular text for the mass but retained the Gregorian melodies of the Ordinary. Unlike the reformation of the mass in the Danish Church, congregational song made slow progress in Sweden (and Finland). Liturgical music was characterized by a strong conservatism. It was King Gustav Vasa who insisted that the Latin mass, though

<sup>79</sup> See Olavus Petri, "Then Swenska Messan" *Olavus Petri Samlade Skrifter, Bd. II* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1915), pp.405-447. For an analytical history of liturgical music in the Swedish Church, see Carl-Allan Moberg, *Die Liturgischen Hymnen in Schweden, Bd. I-II* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1947, 1991).



necessarily reformed, not be completely abandoned. The *Articuli ordinantiae* of 1540 stipulated an elaborate setting in Latin for festive days, complete with the use of polyphonic choral settings of the mass. King Gustav Vasa and his successors, Erik XIV (1560-1568) and Johann III (1568-1592) demonstrated strong musical interests, bringing to the musicians of the royal chapel and court the music of Lassus, Isaac, Senfl, and in time, Gabrieli and Hassler.

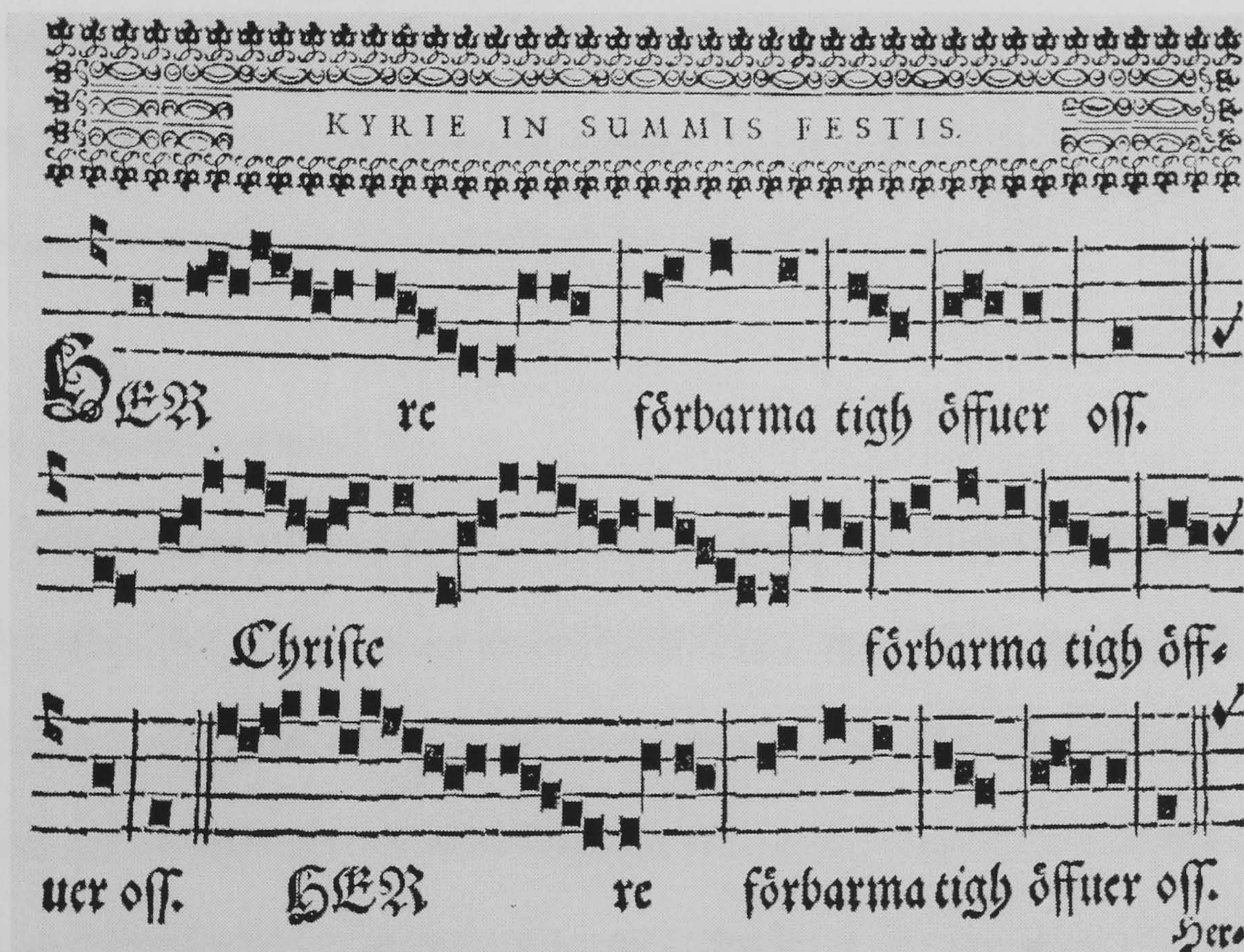


Figure 15 A florid setting of the Kyrie for festival Sundays

Laurentius Petri was a keen admirer of the Gregorian chant and advocated, as Archbishop of the Swedish Church, for the use of Latin in the cities and towns. He allowed the use of Swedish hymns in the country. The task of reforming the schools also fell to Laurentius Petri who established choir-schools in Sweden, replacing the monastery schools. Some of these school choirs, capable of singing difficult

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Carl Henrik Martling, *Svensk Liturgi Historia* (Stockholm: Verbum Förlag, 1992), p. 36.



contrapuntal music, were found in Enköping, Kalmar, Växjö and Strängnäs.<sup>81</sup> One particular choir-school at Åbo in Finland, where the Wittenberg-schooled reformer, Michael (Mikael) Agricola, had served as headmaster and later as Bishop of Turku, Finland, until his death in 1557, was the site where Didrik Peter of Nyland began to compile his famous collection of songs called *Piae Cantiones ecclesiasticae et scholasticae*. (Agricola's full appreciation for music's art and Lutheran theology had supported the flowering of musical composition in Åbo.) Published in 1582, this was the first Swedish work to use mensural notation. It was a collection of Latin, German, French and Swedish songs in monophonic and polyphonic settings.<sup>82</sup>

### *What Is Lutheran in Music?*

If the answer to the question "What is Lutheran?" is limited to the insights of Martin Luther, that answer means an understanding of music that is united with the Word of God, expressed in the careful compositional craft of melody and text as one. If the answer includes all those who subscribe to the Augsburg Confession, that answer means an understanding of music that is much broader in its association with the Word as text. Historically, by developments in the Lutheran lands, the latter describes the Lutheran understanding of music as embracing both the old and the new. It also has the consent of Martin Luther, who desired to place no binding rules on the gift of music, as there are no binding rules in the Gospel. Yet at the center of this broader understanding of music in the Lutheran Church there must be Luther's own desire that

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<sup>81</sup> See John Horton, *Scandinavian Music: A Short History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1963), pp. 33-37.

<sup>82</sup> The collection includes the spring song *Tempus adest florum* that has come to be the tune associated with the Christmas carol *Good King Wenceslas*.



this music have *die rechte Art*, capable of “singing and saying” the Gospel.

From this brief survey it may be seen that from its infancy the Lutheran Reformation embodied a broad spectrum of musical expression. The Lutheran reform of the mass exemplifies this broad range of musical realizations:

1. Every Lutheran Divine Service could be held entirely in Latin, with Latin texts and Gregorian melodies.
2. Every Divine Service could be held entirely in the vernacular language—German, Danish-Norwegian, Swedish—with melodies that were newly composed and/or taken from folktunes.
3. Any portion of the Latin order could be replaced with a vernacular prose text, whether with Gregorian-based melodies or with other melodies.
4. Any Latin or vernacular prose text could be replaced with a congregational *lied*/hymn.
5. A congregational *lied*/hymn could be added to any Latin or vernacular portion of the Ordinary (See *Fig. 13*, next page, for an example).
6. At various places in the Divine Service (most notably before or after the sermon, and during the Communion) congregational *lieder*/hymns could be added freely.<sup>83</sup>

The interrelationship of music and text flowed between twin poles marked at one end by Luther’s *Deutsche Messe* with his tightly crafted use of the Church modes and their affects, and marked at the other end by those orders of service (chiefly in the rural Scandinavian lands) where substitutions of text and melody were freely made.

The line between sacred and secular was fluid. Music as *donum Dei*, God’s gift, was an understanding equally at ease in the church, in the school and in the home. Secular tunes and texts were adapted to ecclesiastical use. Church music was sung and played around the after-dinner table. The royal houses endowed their chapels and



courts with a flowering of music from the creative pens of Lutheran and Catholic composers alike. It was a time of breath-taking change and variety. It was a time of maintaining a grip on tradition.



Figure 16 A Danish setting of Luther's *Credo* hymn

The seeds of a Christologically explicated aesthetic in music are present in this Reformation era. Yet like seeds which are planted and unseen, the Christology is more implicit than explicit. The doctrine of the *communication idiomatum* thoroughly influences the music of this time, although this doctrine is not mentioned in connection

<sup>83</sup> See Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, p. 63.



with music. The divine attributes of sufficiency and perspicuity in the Word of sacred Scripture are communicated in Walter's musical compositions. The human attributes in Rhau's published musical art are communicated in the proclamation of the divine Word. The divine and human attributes in Word and music are not confused (*genus idiomaticum*) but neither are they separated in their efficacy for creating and nurturing faith (*genus apotelesmaticum*). The glory of God, hidden in the man Jesus, hidden in the composer's art (*genus tapeinotikon*) allows music to participate in that glory now and in heaven (*genus maiestaticum*).

The doctrine of the Threefold Office of Christ is also present in this music. The Prophetic Office speaks through the singing and saying of the Gospel. The Priestly Office conveys the Christological gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation by the Word-inhabited music (as also the music-enfleshed Word). By the Regal Office the Christ of time and eternity, of earth and heaven reigns in the order and freedom of music's art. The singular Office of Christ, borne together by the Office-bearers of preacher and musician, is necessary to ensure that the singing and saying of the Word in each generation is set forth in "the sound of sermons and words mixed with sweet melodies" (Luther).

It is within the *locus* of Office, however, that the seeds of conflict between theology and music, between theologians and musicians, are also planted at this time. Early on, in the Torgau Articles of 1530<sup>84</sup>, music became identified with the doctrine of *adiaphora*, indifferent matters. While it is not a light matter to criticize the

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<sup>84</sup> "The unity of the Christian Church consists not in external, human ordinances...Augustine also writes expressly to Januarius that the unity of the Church does not consist in external human ordinances, and says that such ordinances should be free, and may or may not be observed." The Torgau Articles, March, 1530," in Michael Reu, *The Augsburg Confession: A Collection of Sources with An Historical Introduction* (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House. 1930). p. \*81.



Lutheran fathers, yet they are not honored by insisting upon infallibility on their part. Music as an *adiaphoron* separates the “singing and saying” which Luther so highly prized. The generations following the Reformation era will witness the deleterious effect this adiaphoristic separation would have on music and theology. The preacher-theologian will come to clash with the musician-theologian with the one Office of Holy Ministry.

Ironically the theologians who declared music to be an *adiaphoron* will be the ones who attempt to prescribe the required styles of music, *i.e.*, the Netherlandish. What had been descriptive of the music of the Reformation era will become prescriptive for later eras. Musicians, for their part, who experienced the new styles would tend to reject the old, under the rationale that music is an *adiaphoron*.

Yet from within this conflict (a true Lutheran *theologia crucis*) will come the resolution. As the Office of Christ is one so the singing and saying will be united in some individuals whose gifts for theology and music will stand against the adiaphoristic tide. In their hands the singing and saying united together will restore an order that springs from the Gospel rather than an order that is imposed by Law. Singing and saying, the one Office of the ministry of the Word, will shine in the darkness.



## Chapter 2 *Motet: The Polyphony of Old and New* Beyond the Reformation

*Experience testifies that, after the Word of God, music alone deserves to be celebrated as mistress and queen of the emotions of the human heart. — Martin Luther*

The seeds of a Christologically considered music planted in the first generation of the Lutheran Reformation begin to sprout in the next generations. Some seed falls on good soil, some on rocky ground. The unfortunate step taken in the time of the Reformation by those who separated music and the Word, making music in the Church an isolated and subordinate element in the proclamation of the Word, contributed to the rocky controversy over *adiaphora*. It was a controversy that yielded little fruit. The musical heirs holding to Martin Luther's viewpoint of a simultaneity in Word and music—his “singing and saying” of the Gospel—will bring forth abundant fruit. Some will bring the musical style of the Netherlandish School to a high degree of development. Others will embrace the new style coming into the Lutheran lands from Italy, laying the groundwork for musical compositions in succeeding generations of Lutheran church musicians.

While there are a number of significant composers and musicians in the era of confessional solidification (roughly the late 16th century through the 17th century) following the death of Martin Luther, three names serve well in charting the musical developments in the history of Lutheran church music of this period. The first is Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) who produced a wealth of music for the Church while also producing an encyclopedia of theology and music in the three



volumes of an unfinished four-volume collection entitled *Syntagma Musicum*.

While demonstrating a firm grasp of the new music of the Italian Baroque, Praetorius brings the High Renaissance style to a rich climax.

The third individual to be considered is Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672), whose life overlaps with Praetorius and who stands as a giant of Lutheran church music. His compositions and influence, however, are too often overshadowed by the great 18th century Lutheran church musician, Johann Sebastian Bach. Schütz will embrace the Italian Baroque, imbibing deeply the music of Monteverdi and the Gabriellis. Yet with his own significant musical gifts, Schütz will fashion something new which will influence Lutheran church music for a long time to come.

Between these two significant musicians, Praetorius and Schütz, this chapter will also consider the writing of Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), a Lutheran astronomer and mathematician as well as a gifted musical amateur. His treatise, *Harmonices Mundi*, while deemed a product of mysticism by 20th century thinkers, did not flow from Christian mysticism or *musica speculativa*, but from Kepler's understanding of his Lutheran faith. While certainly engaged with the Pythagorean theory of music and cosmology, Kepler will produce new insights and understandings as a result of his Lutheran theology, which will part company with the ancient Greek musical theory.

### *Michael Praetorius—Heaven and Earth in Music*

Michael Praetorius dedicated the first volume of his *Syntagma Musicum* (1614/1615) to “the most reverend, most illustrious, reverend, most noble, most excellent, most renowned, most learned, by the gift of God bishops, abbots, fathers,



directors, canons, doctors, and church inspectors. lords, protectors, and cherished patrons”<sup>1</sup> as a source of ammunition for the struggles placed upon them in their callings as the teachers and defenders of the faith. Praetorius perceived that

both the preaching [*concio*] and the singing [*cantio*] of the liturgy have so many hostile enemies all around, who will try any violence, either to snatch away and suppress through unmusical people the treasure of the church committed to the liturgy, primarily instrumental music [*organicæ*], or to corrupt and distort it by means of anti-musical people, having made statements filled with superstition and error.<sup>2</sup>

His advocacy for defending the Word is coupled with the defense of music “against those who absurdly murmur or cry aloud with hypocritical throats, and against the demolishers and destroyers of organs and choirs.”<sup>3</sup>

What is the cause of Praetorius’ concern and his polemical language? His words are a symptom of the *Adiaphoristic Controversies* which raged as inter- and intra-confessional debates in the years following the *Augsburg Interim* of 1548. The systematizing theologians of Lutheran orthodoxy isolated various *loci* of Christian theology for the sake of clarity in confessing the faith; what is confessed and what is condemned.<sup>4</sup> The negative outcome was that in times of controversy not all theologians, preachers or church musicians held the doctrines of theology together as an organic whole. Some individual doctrines developed significance apart from the *corpus* of Christian doctrine. The doctrine of *adiaphora* is one such departure.

Music in the Church was generally posited and discussed under this doctrinal

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Praetorius, “Epistola Dedicatoria,” *Syntagma Musicum, Bd. I, Musicae Artis Analecta Wittenberg 1614/15* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1986). No page given.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Praetorius’ terms ἀμούσους, “unmusical people”, and κακομούσους, “anti-musical people”, were favorites in his polemics against his critics among the Zwinglian/Calvinist confessions.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> For example, see the articles of the *Augsburg Confession*.



*locus*. Music is neither commanded nor forbidden by Holy Scripture in the life of the Church (Luther's freedom of the Gospel was cited in support).

As the Reformation unfolded controversies arose between the Luther and others, notably the Swiss Reformer, Ulrich Zwingli. Zwingli maintained that anything not commanded by Holy Scripture was presumed to be forbidden.

Zwingli asked where in the Scriptures God has commanded singing in worship. Nowhere, he answered. If you want to know what Paul meant about 'singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God' in Colossians 3:16, Zwingli—like those against whom Niceta of Remesiana argued—says this: 'Here Paul does not teach mumbling and murmuring in the churches, but shows us the true song that is pleasing to God, that we sing the praise and glory of God not with our voices, like the Jewish singers, but with our hearts.'<sup>5</sup>

For Zwingli the Reformation principle of *sola fidei* was a bare *fideism*, a faith removed entirely from any outward forms.

The followers of John Calvin and his theological reforms adopted still another position. Citing the work of St. Augustine and his ambivalence toward music in the Church, the Calvinists did not oppose the use of music, yet they did not embrace it whole-heartedly either. St. Augustine had concluded,

So I waiver between the danger that lies in gratifying the senses and the benefits which, as I know from experience, can accrue from singing. Without committing myself to an irrevocable opinion, I am inclined to approve the custom of singing in church, in order that by indulging the ears weaker spirits may be inspired with feelings of devotion. Yet when I find the singing itself more moving than the truth which it conveys, I confess that this is a grievous sin, and at those times I would prefer not to hear the singer.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Westermeyer, *Te Deum* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p. 151. Though Zwingli was the most musically accomplished among the reformers, he told Luther at the Marburg Colloquy, "Spirit and flesh contradict each other." Zwingli isolated music in the secular sphere and forbade its use in the church because the church is the realm of the Spirit.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Joyce L. Irwin, *Neither Voice Nor Heart Alone: German Lutheran Theology of Music in the Age of the Baroque*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1993), p. 26. The words are from St. Augustine's *Confessions* X, 33. Irwin's book is a wealth of historical documentation of the heated, yet



Not all scholars agree with the Calvinist conclusion that these words about music from St. Augustine betray ambivalence.

Augustine there points out that the beauty of the musical sound can sometimes draw the attention from the religious contents of the words of the song. This is an important insight, even now to be taken seriously—but building on this passage only can give the impression that Augustine has a most reserved recognition of music in the Christian liturgy, which is not at all the case. For a Christian congregation nothing can be more useful and holy than singing psalms together, he assures us in another context. And even if the main rule is that music should be servant of the Biblical text, Augustine also stresses the wordless musical jubilation [outlined in his commentary on Psalm 98:3-4] as a worthy expression of ecstatic feelings for which no adequate words can be found.<sup>7</sup>

Consequently polemics, sometimes virulent, developed between the Lutherans and the adherents of Reformed<sup>8</sup> theology in the German lands. The Lutheran protagonists in the controversies over *adiaphora* adopted the position that when Christian freedom is threatened an *adiaphoron* ceases to be indifferent, neither commanded nor forbidden. It becomes a matter of confessional integrity.<sup>9</sup>

While the controversy among the theologians was carried on in the language of *adiaphora*, it allowed church musicians like Praetorius the opportunity to express the issue in more fruitful terms, namely in Christological terms. Praetorius employed Luther's views that music, like the Word itself (rather, like the "Word made flesh"), is a gift of God. Therefore music is better served not as a *locus* under the doctrine of *adiaphora* but rather under the Gospel and the ministry of the Word.

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often fruitless, debate concerning music within the doctrine of *adiaphora*. The conclusions in her book are often marred, however, because the author, a non-Lutheran, does not fully comprehend the insights of the Lutheran theologians and musicologists with whom she disagrees.

<sup>7</sup> Ragnar Holte, "Klingande sakrament: Augustinska och aktuella teologiska perspektiv på musik," *Tro & Tanke, Svenska Kyrkans Forskningsråd*, 2001:1, p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> The term "Reformed" includes the whole theological spectrum between Zwingli and Calvin.

<sup>9</sup> *Formula of Concord, Epitome*, X, 6.



To this end Praetorius is both eloquent and forceful in his defense of music with the Word.

And so composers [*Melopæi*], or, if you will, professionals skilled in producing music, have varied their modes and the applications of individual notes in accordance with the diversity of the subject matter and the words. For certainly the most skilled exponents, like Apelles with his faithful and careful brush, appear to use the notes that speak and modes that color the living image of sacred eloquence by means of the blood and juice of words [*sanguine et succo verborum*] with the sinews and muscles of their sentences [*cum nervis thorisque sententiarum*] to represent clearly and evidently an attracting and affecting [*ψυχαγωγὸς et flexanima*] choral melody adapting diverse movements in diverse modes to the diversity of the subject matter. For he sings in a manner which reflects the text [*accinit textui*], and so in compassion he produces a tearful voice from a constrained heart, in fear, a hesitant sound from a heart constricted and pricked, in pleasure and spiritual joy an effusive joyful kind of voice from an extended heart, finally in grief, or, if you will, commiseration, he produces a heavy type of utterance, as it were, or, rather, compressed and enveloped by the sound, from a heart seething and angry. Whence choral music, for the singular eloquences of God, excites and supplies [*exsuscitat ac suppeditat*] attention with the ears, meditation with the minds, firm affection and devotion with the hearts.<sup>10</sup>

Certainly the devout and faithful mind seizes upon the report spread about that choral music and the psalmody of the Church is pleasing to God.... For the encomium is very true, in which that φιλόμουσος [“music-lover,” in contrast to Praetorius’ opponents whom he called αμούσους and κακομούσους], the well-known nightingale (Philipp Melanchthon, I think) commended music, saying: Nothing is sweeter to any man not depraved than doctrine rightly illuminated with words, which is well carried to the ears and souls by harmony.<sup>11</sup>

To the end, as in all misfortune, both spiritual and bodily, divine music [*musicæ divinæ*] helped the pious rouse himself to wrestle and to bear with his pains. Thus, in the hour of death, especially the martyrs when about to die, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, strengthened by sacred music and the recollection of psalms and hymns, found that the fear of death was removed, so that courageously and fearlessly they lay down their lives, thinking little about all the threats of tyrants and the horrible torments of punishment, and gently delivering up their soul.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Syntagma Musicum, Bd. I*, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32. Praetorius may have his contemporary controversies in mind when he commends the role of music to the faithful for patient suffering for the sake of the Gospel.



After the κύριε ἐλέησεν the Church, in a certain way more joyful on account of having obtained pardon for its sins in Christ, who was born in Bethlehem, and trusting to take part in the heavenly singing [*concentus in cælis*] with the angels, sings the angelic hymn (that He whom angels worship in the skies men may worship on earth, rejoicing with one another [*i.e.*, angels and humanity] because, as the Apostle testifies in Ephesians 1, Christ has restored all things in heaven and on earth).<sup>13</sup>

This last quotation illustrates a unifying theme in Praetorius's theological writings and also in his musical compositions. The mutual participation of heaven and earth in music is emphasized by Praetorius in regard to the doctrine of the Christian faith and also in regard to the "science" of music as the ancients understood it.

The three volumes of Praetorius' *Syntagma Musicum*, published between 1614 and 1619, provide a wealth of insight into the musical *Weltanschauung* of the early Lutherans. This is most true for the first of the three volumes. Written in Latin for the learned doctors of theology the volume explains in rich and manifold detail how Lutherans view music in the church and in the world. The first volume of the *Syntagma*, entitled "Of the service of musical art", is divided into two parts. The first part is an extensive and, in view of the apologetic nature of the work, strongly argued exposition of the use of music in the Church, from the time of the Old Covenant into Praetorius' own day. The second part encompasses an equally thorough and appreciative survey of the uses of music among the ancient Greeks and Romans. In the second part Praetorius cites several key philosophers and writers, primarily Greek, who exhibit the theory and practice of music among the ancients. While the work is polemical in nature, written in the heat of the inter-confessional controversies between Lutheran and Reformed theologians, one may gain insight by examining the sources

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<sup>13</sup> *Syntagma Musicum*, Bd. I, p. 41. These comments come in a chapter on the liturgy, specifically



Praetorius cites in his polemics.

Praetorius, the learned polemicist, cites Bible passages, both Old Testament and New, in support of the fullest use of music in the Divine Service of the Church. He especially cites the example of King David to support the inclusion of musical instruments in worship, in opposition to the Reformed who opposed the use of instruments. On the other hand, in response to the Roman Catholic critics, Praetorius outlines how through the various portions of the Divine Service and the continued use of Latin the Lutherans were truly catholic in their worship practice.

In addition to the Scriptural passages and comments by Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon and other Lutherans, Praetorius liberally cites ancient Greek and early Christian writers in praise of music. His references are drawn from contacts he had with Seth Calvisius, who died in 1615. Calvisius owned one or two compendia of philosophers' comments.<sup>14</sup>

In the preface to the second part of *Syntagma musicum I*, Praetorius explains his reasons for such a thorough explanation of the history, theory and use of music outside the Church in the ancient times. Intending this *Partis Secundæ* of the *Syntagma musicum* to benefit both the Church and the schools of the Lutheran territories as *Pars Prima* had, Praetorius states how he is building upon the work of Luther and his colleagues, and carrying their work further.

Whereby for piety I have hardly begun to prepare from the choral harmonies what Luther and his other musical colleagues have provided for the Latin liturgy of the Church, nevertheless I have not hesitated to employ with eager inspiration and effort the ancient authorities whose friendly sounds, the more fresh, are elicited and ascribed together—

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concerning the singing of the *Gloria in excelsis*.

<sup>14</sup> See Dietlind Möller-Weiser. *Untersuchungen zum I. Band des Syntagma Musicum von Michael Praetorius* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1993). p. 18. The author suggests that Praetorius used *Melopoija ex Zarlino* (1582) a work which carried great meaning at the time.



Church and world, sacred and secular, vocal and instrumental music—in the *Syntagma musicum* where I might display them according to their theory and use.<sup>15</sup>

That this pairing of music inside and outside of the Church is to be organically considered rather than as a comparison of disparate musical worlds can be seen in Praetorius' words at the conclusion of his preface to the second part.

No one questions that I have explained enough in the *Syntagma musicum* how in the Church music sweetly [*suaviter*] soothes the truly devoted mind, how the Spirit may animate the heart with vigor and soothe, strengthen and agitate the pious affections through διάνοια concerning *Psalmodia*, υπομνήματα concerning *Missodia*, ἐξήγημα concerning *Leiturgodia* and θεωρία concerning instruments.

In civil society and private life music also moves the mind and body in the same way. It stirs up and restores youthful vigor and seriousness. This same affect and effect in natural music will explain, I believe, the inclusion of this part of the *Syntagma musicum* with the first part. Is there, indeed, anything more pleasant that can be observed in the ancient time than their sacrifices, feasts, funerals and studies equipped with musical songs and instruments, just as we may overhear in our present circumstances?<sup>16</sup>

Praetorius consciously combines the analogy of faith and the analogy of being in music's art. Yet, as a Lutheran, he is able to recognize the richness of the ancient theory of music for use in the Church because Christian faith recognizes the work of the living God in the theory and use of music by the ancients. This hand of God is recognized in faith because of the Christ, God Incarnate, by whom and through whom and in whom all things, including the ancient theory of music, have being.

Now music outside the Church [which Praetorius variously calls *Profana*, *Liberalis*, *Ingenua*, *Humana*, *Genialis*] with its ways and means directed and instituted by the foregoing [*i.e.*, the first part of the *Syntagma* on music in the Church], will improve the way of prayer chanted from of old.... [This improvement will come] from the kind of music which some, by true religion, call profane, but the heathen called

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<sup>15</sup> *Syntagma Musicum*, Bd. I, pp. 158-159.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.



sacred, even calling it divine music.<sup>17</sup>

While Praetorius does not accept the reasons given by the ancients for calling their music divine (he calls such reasons superstition), he does accept that they truly recognized something divine in music which he and other Lutherans ought to recognize by faith even more clearly. This is especially true concerning the relationship of music with arithmetic and physics. As Melanchthon had observed in a preface for Georg Rhau, “for the soul possesses a certain remarkable relationship with numbers and harmony” (See Chapter 1, p. 40), Praetorius can set the ancient music theory of numbers together with Christian faith and recognize a true *eurhythmia*, a finely proportioned movement in music.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, when music is related to the ancient *Physica*, Christian faith can see the perfect form which Plato and other ancient philosophers concluded was hidden beneath the corporeal form. For in faith—a faith created in the God-Man Jesus Christ—the perfect is revealed, not hidden, in the corporeal.<sup>19</sup>

Praetorius must be content, however, simply to suggest a beginning for thoughts which others may pursue further. Yet this beginning is, in his pious estimation, a significant beginning for music as an earthly/heavenly gift, whether used in the Church or outside the Church.

And about music’s relationship with *Ethica*, *Physica*, *Arithmetica* and *Astronomia*, I have hardly touched upon how these relate to the former. If one’s desire is to philosophize and make their relationships more clear, I feel that it will not prove to be reasonably easy because of the price one must pay for the work to present this clarity.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Syntagma Musicum*, Bd. I, p. 165.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.



Since the *Adiaphoristic Controversies* of Praetorius' time encompassed the use of the organ and other instruments in worship, Praetorius expresses himself liberally on that issue within his *Syntagma*. The Zwinglian and Calvinist critics of the Lutheran usage of instruments in worship appealed to the absence of such practice in the New Testament. Praetorius, therefore, supports his argument within the *Syntagma* by citations from both Old and New Testaments and a great number of patristic writers, as well as the ancient authorities cited in *Partis Secundæ*, who also addressed the uses of instrumental music. Yet in this he centers his comments within the context of the proclamation of the Word and very rarely does he employ the language of *adiaphora*.

Finally, in order that the epilogue may not seem foolish but useful, let it be accepted, not joined with boasting, but with the clear utility which has been pointed out and supplied in abundance, not only by the Bible, but by ancient and more recent theologians, worthy of belief, and other ancient writers. And let each good person who promotes and maintains instrumental music (whether he be destitute of the art and science of instruments, or learned), make use of this *Theoria Organices*, such as it is.... For if anyone is unable to play the harp or sound trumpets or horns, let him sing with his heart and soul, as Paul bids (Ephesians 5).... And if anyone devotes himself to the practice of playing instruments, which is the duty of organists, let him delight in and desire praise and honor for organ music, that he may be occupied and busied, both honestly in private homes, and piously in church.... But the greatest care must be taken that organs, which many anti-musical and unmusical people unhesitatingly set aside and put out of churches, be kept, set up for the public devotion of the church, and properly used.<sup>21</sup>

Praetorius encouraged the use of the organ to support singing by congregations and by choirs. The organ, as other instruments, also assisted in the proclamation of the Word.

In conclusion I must inform all organists that they should generally make use of an appropriate introduction when attempting to perform a *concerto* with several choirs in church or at a banquet. Although it may not belong to the main work, it would serve to make the audience favorably disposed, receptive and attentive, and thus entertain them the better—just as most excellent orators do who want to hold forth more

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<sup>21</sup> *Syntagma Musicum*, Bd. I, p. 146. There is a printing error in the original, listing this page as 346 rather than 146.



extensively on important matters. Thus using their prelude at the beginning they should call the listeners and the entire ensemble together, as it were, so that they may look for the parts and tune their instruments correctly and that way prepare themselves for the start of a good and well-sounding performance.<sup>22</sup>

The most frequently cited patristic support for the use of instruments in the church was thought to have come from Justin Martyr. Although more recent scholarship has called into question the authenticity of the quotation as belonging to Justin Martyr<sup>23</sup>, the use of these words in Lutheran polemics against those who forbid instruments, especially the organ, reveals that the Lutherans were supportive of all music, instrumental and vocal, in the worship life of the Church.

The instrumental music which was allowed in private was not excluded from the public gatherings of the church by the ancients... Justin replies: 'Those who were under the Law were not satisfied merely to sing, but had to sing with instruments, with leaping and finger-snapping. Then, in the church, the use of such instruments, and others which suited the dull-witted, is taken away from the songs, and singing alone remains.' For, although one might deduce and infer from these words that musical instruments were not in use at the public gatherings of the church at that time, nevertheless, what was said about the rejection of finger-snapping and dancing, about the instruments acquired for sinful and lascivious purposes only, such as were used in the Bacchic orgies, does not apply to all musical instruments without distinction.... The fact that the church, even at that time, did not lack the accompaniment of music instruments, is shown by Justin's list of the beautiful fruits of Psalmody...where he inserts these words.... 'For this is the Word of God, whether thought with the mind, or sung, or played on an instrument.'<sup>24</sup>

Praetorius will repeat this pseudo-Justinian quotation again in the introduction to his collection *Polyhymnia Caduceatrix et Panegyrica* in 1619. In the forward to that collection, as he had written in his *Epistola Dedicatoria* for the first volume of the

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<sup>22</sup> Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum, Bd. III, Termini Musici 1619*, facsimile ed. Wilibald Gurlitt (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1953), p. 151.

<sup>23</sup> The quote is now credited to Theodoret of Cyprus (5<sup>th</sup> c.). For a brief history of the use of this quotation, see Robin A. Leaver, "Johann Sebastian Bach and the Lutheran Understanding of Music," *Lutheran Quarterly*, XVI, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 37ff.



*Syntagma musicum*, Praetorius employs a play on the words *cantio*, “song,” and *concio*, sermon.” While some critics of Praetorius’ writing on theology and music suggest he is guilty of employing hyperbole in his polemics<sup>25</sup>, it would be more accurate to conclude that he is following closely with Luther and his dictum of the *singen und sagen* of God’s Word. If so, Luther’s “singing and saying” is more determinative for Lutheran church music than the number of times he uses that phrase might at first indicate. In the *Polyhymnia* preface, Praetorius writes:

Consequently, for the completeness and certainty of church authority, and also for the completeness of worship, it is not only appropriate to have a CONCIO, a good sermon, but also in addition the necessary CANTIO, good music and song. Thus correct and true is the meaning of Justin:..*Verbum Dei est, sive mente cogitetir, sive cantatur, sive pulsu edatur*. ‘It is and remains God’s Word in the thinking of the mind, the singing of the voice, and also in the beating and playing upon instruments.’<sup>26</sup>

On the title page of Praetorius’ collection, *Musae Sioniae*, is a woodcut that captures in succinct fashion all that Praetorius wrote about music in the church (*Fig. 1*, next page). At the top of the picture is God, represented by the Tetragrammaton, surrounded by the cherubim (also symbols for the four Gospels) and the choirs of heaven. The heavenly choir is accompanied with instruments, notice King David and his harp, as it sings the praise and glory of God.

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<sup>24</sup> *Syntagma Musicum*, Bd. I, p. 138.

<sup>25</sup> Friedrich Blume, the eminent Lutheran musicologist, is among these critics. “The musician faced the congregation not as one from their midst but rather as an independent herald and biblical interpreter, a personality as opposed to the masses. Music forgot to say ‘we’; it said ‘I,’ preaching by virtue of its own power. The orthodox clergy again emphasized that the sermon was the focal point of the service; Michael Praetorius, filled with self-confident pride, placed *cantio* (song) and *contio* (sermon) side by side as having equal status. In music, dogmatic rigidity in the orthodox doctrines joined with ego-conscious piety...” Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Praetorius in the dedicatory epistle, trans. Robin Leaver. *Vol. 17, Gesamtausgabe der musikalische Werke von Michael Praetorius*, ed. Friederich Blume, 21 vols. (Wolfenbüttel: Kallmeyer & Mösseler, 1928-1960), p. viii. For an extended rebuttal to the critics concerning this Justinian quote, its authority and relevance to Lutheran music (whether the applicability of the quote is dependent upon its authority), the see Robin A. Leaver. “Johann Sebastian Bach and the Lutheran Understanding of Music.”



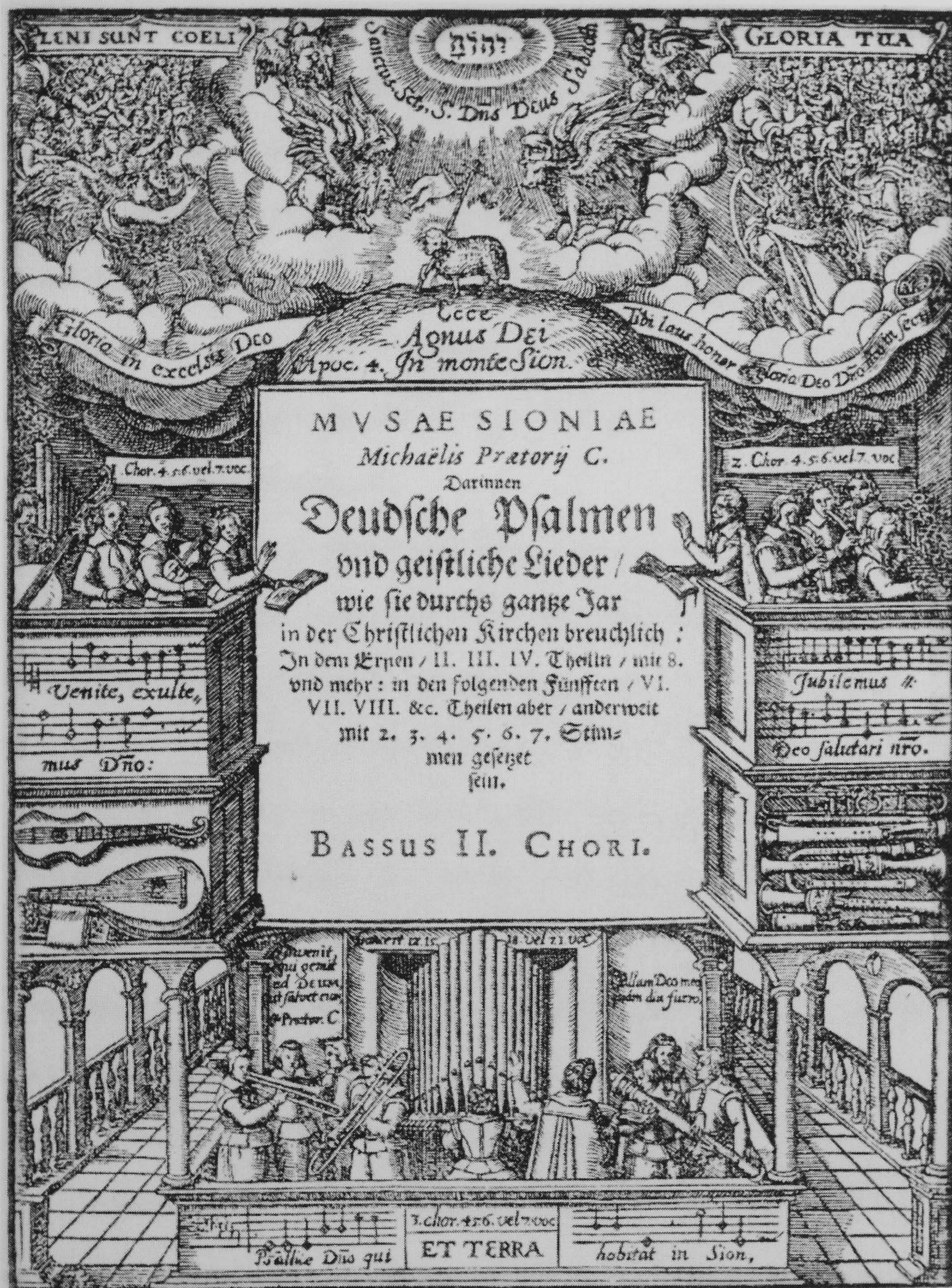


Figure 1 The title page for Praetorius' *Musae Sioniae*, portraying earthly and heavenly musicians united by the victorious Lamb of God, Christ the Priest and King.



The victorious Lamb of God stands on Mount Zion—the Mediator, Jesus Christ—between heaven and earth. The earthly musicians, both vocal and instrumental, united with the choir of heaven by the Lamb, likewise praise the glory of God. The music of heaven resounds within the music of earth, while the music of earth resounds along with the music of heaven. This is true, however, only in, with, by and through the Lamb at the center—Christ Jesus, whose body is the Church, the communion of saints in heaven and on earth. In Praetorius’ estimation, then, the Office of musician is a priestly office as well as a prophetic office because of the Christ in whom the Office is given.

On the title page the earthly musicians are divided into multiple choirs in the Venetian style. The choir in the gallery on the left includes a singer together with stringed instruments (violin, viola and violone) and organ. They proclaim with voice and instrument: *Venite, exultemus Domino*, “O come, let us exalt the Lord.” In the gallery on the right are a singer, zinks (cornetti) and a regal. They proclaim with voice and instrument: *Jubilemus Deo salutari nostro*, “Let us be jubilant toward God our Savior.” The third choir of the earthly trinity of musical groups, is located at the bottom center, made up of the more boisterous instruments—sackbutts (trombones), a dulzian and organ—with singers. This choir proclaims: *Psallite Domino qui habitat in Sion*, “Sing praise to the Lord who dwells in Zion.”

Praetorius includes other instruments to supplement this praise of God, even though these are not in use in the scene. Mounted on the string choir gallery at the left are a lute and a gamba. With the quiet wind instruments on the right are mounted recorders, krummhorns and a schalmei.

That Praetorius envisions the music of earth joined with the music of the



heavenly choirs, and not as a lower form of the higher, heavenly music, is demonstrated by surrounding the whole scene with the unity of the text of the *Sanctus*. *Pleni sunt Coeli...Gloria Tua*, “The heavens are full of Your glory” is printed at the top. At the bottom are the words *Et Terra*. “And earth” is likewise filled with God’s glory. All the musicians, heavenly and earthly, are united together in praise by the victorious Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. The earthly, finite musicians participate in the immortal heavenly choir (*genus maiestaticum*) while the participation of the glorious heavenly choir is hidden in the lowliness of the musicians of the earthly choir (*genus tapeinotikon*).



Figure 2 From *Polyhymnia Exercitatrix* (1620); Praetorius offers the solo voices either a simple version of the melody (lines 1 & 3) or a more ornamented version (lines 2 & 4)

The thoroughness of Praetorius’ writings on music and theology are given an equal thoroughness and creativity in his musical compositions. He has been described as “positively obsessed by the Lutheran hymn, yet who devoted a great part of his tremendous creative energy to the absorption of every Italian innovation and its fusion



with his own characteristic vernacular type of sacred music.”<sup>27</sup> While in the service of Duke Heinrich Julius of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel Praetorius published several collections of music. The *Musae Sioniae* was published in nine parts between 1605 and 1610. It represents an encyclopedic study of settings of the Lutheran chorales. The variety of settings proves how rich the chorale could be for inspiring Lutheran church musicians.

Among the settings Praetorius employed three general types of compositional form. A number of settings employ the motet style (*Auff mutete Art*) keeping alive the older tradition from pre-Reformation years. The influence of the Italian Baroque is heard in madrigal-type (*madrigalisch*) settings of the chorales. In these the chorale melodies are broken into smaller pieces and set in dialogue among the voices. The third style of chorale setting in the *Musae Sioniae* expands upon the *cantus-firmus* tradition that Johann Walter established for Lutheran church music. This style especially lent itself to Praetorius’ Lutheran understanding of the impact of music upon the proclamation of the Word.

Praetorius was conscious that by his use of *cantus-firmus* based compositions, the text was bound to a musical presentation or interpretation: ‘In applying the text to the notes I must observe and therefore hold to the chorale and customary melody more than to the proper style [*rechte Art*] of setting a text.’ One might hear an apology in these words, that he is not as text-based or affect-laden in his composing as many others. The fact is, Praetorius is not following the trend of his time with his distinct compositional emphasis [*Schwerpunkt*]<sup>28</sup>; one is reminded somewhat by the humble attention to this genre in his young contemporary Heinrich Schütz.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Hans Redlich, “Early Baroque Church Music,” in *The Age of Humanism 1540-1630, Vol. IV of The New Oxford History of Music*, ed. Gerald Abraham (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 546; Quoted in Carl Schalk, *Music in Early Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), p. 93.

<sup>28</sup> That is, putting a greater emphasis on the music itself in its role of interpreting the text runs counter to the “word first, music second” principle of many of Praetorius’ contemporaries.

<sup>29</sup> Helmut Lauterwasser, “Michael Praetorius—Anmerkung zu seinem Schaffen unter besonderer



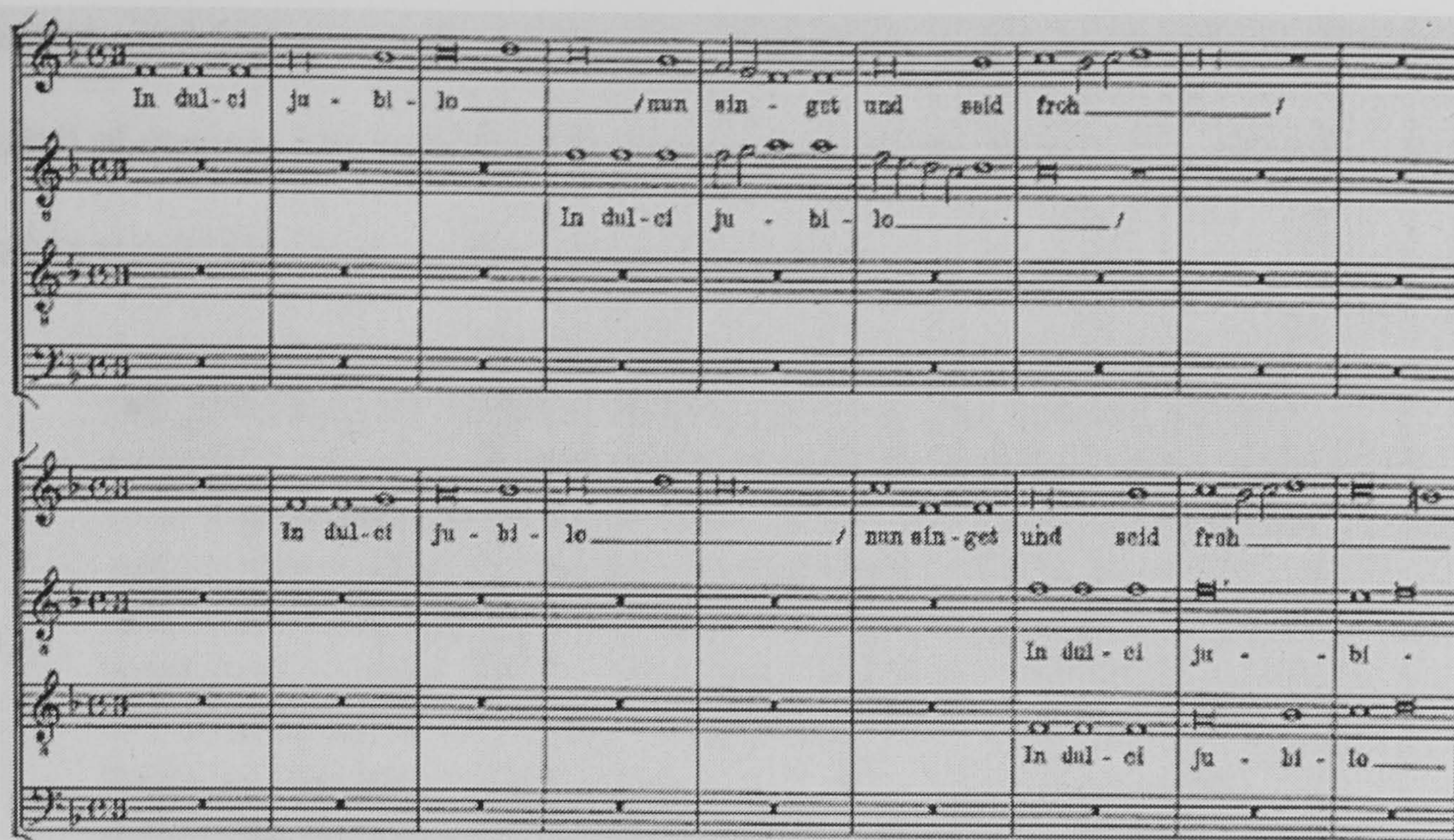


Figure 3 A double choir setting of *In Dulci Jubilo* from Praetorius' *Musae Sioniae*, Bd. II  
Though written with open notes, the tempo is bright.

Whether his music was written in the older styles or whether it embraced the Italian influences, Praetorius expressed himself clearly about how his music was to be performed so that its service to the hearer and performer would be fully realized. In the third volume of his *Syntagma Musicum* he writes,

The tempo of a performance must not be hurried, or even the most delightful ensemble will sound confused. With a slower beat, however, the music is more agreeable and can be grasped better. Note values also have to be carefully observed, lest the harmony be marred and disturbed; for to sing without benefit of law and measure is to offend God Himself who, as Plato says, provided all things with number, weight, and measure. But to use, by turns, now a slower, now a faster beat, *in accordance with the text* [emphasis added], lends dignity and grace to a performance and makes it admirable.<sup>30</sup>

The several collections of music for the church were to be coupled with a collection of music for non-church settings. Praetorius envisioned a multi-volume collection of secular music to be called *Musae aoniae*, the counterpart to the *Musae*

Berücksichtigung des evangelischen Kirchenliedes und der gottesdienstlichen Bestimmung," *Von Luther zu Bach* (Sinzig, Germany: Studio, 1999), p. 163.

<sup>30</sup> *Syntagma Musicum*, Bd. III, p. 59.



*Sioniae*. Unfortunately only one volume was produced. *Terpsichore* (1612) contains a wealth of dances. The breadth of this one volume alone signals that Praetorius' *aoniae* project would have been as thorough as his *Sioniae*.

And indeed it is worthy, likewise God does not envy, that at banquets and gatherings, the gladness is delighted by music, both natural and artificial [*cum naturali, tum artificiali & Instrumentali Musica*], only so as it takes place in the Lord, *Psal.* 33, v1. This, and what has been written above, explains the use of instruments in feasts, for indeed 'a ruby in a setting of gold is a concert of music [*Carmina*] at a banquet of wine [*Symposion*],' *Sir.* 32. And 'wine and music gladden the heart,' *Sir.* 41 [42], especially where cheerfulness brings more happiness to the times, as Paul has written: 'Rejoice with those who rejoice,' *Rom.* 12 and to that *Ecclesiastes*. 'In the good of the day enjoy the good,' *Eccles.*, ch. 7.<sup>31</sup>

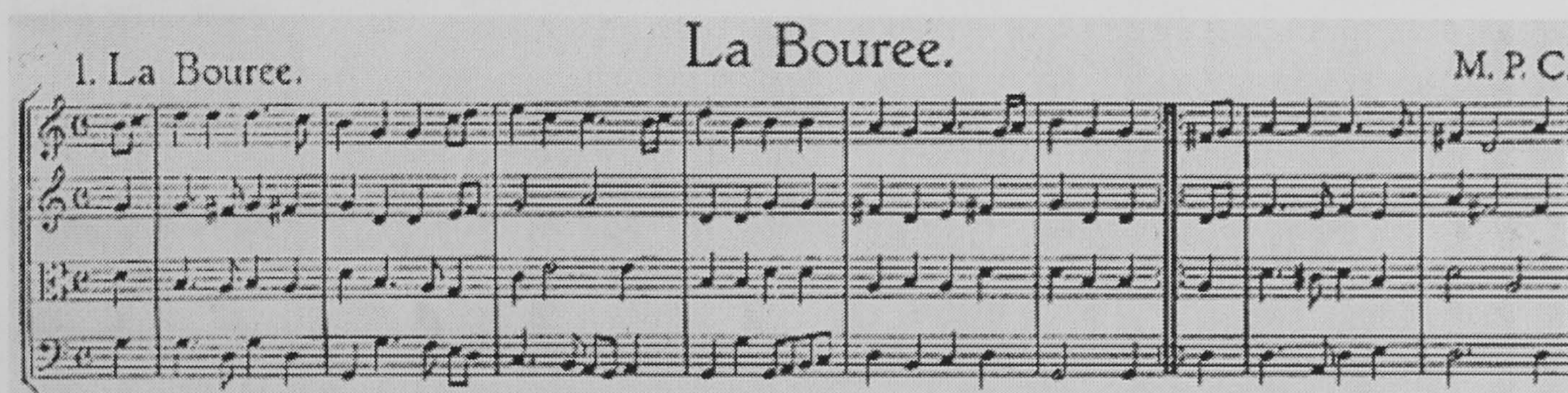


Figure 4 A bouree from *Terpsichore*. The notation M.P.C. is Michael Praetorius Creuzburgensis (his birthplace) as well as his favorite monogram, *Mihi Patria Coelum* ("Heaven is my homeland").

This equal concern for secular music along with music for the Church should not come as a surprise. Praetorius, as a Lutheran, held firmly to Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms. Praetorius' *Sioniae* and *aoniae* collections should not be isolated from each other as sacred and secular music, for they spring from the same muse: Christ. Although having the same muse, Praetorius intends the one collection (*Sioniae*) to serve the kingdom of God's right hand, the Church, while the other collection (*aoniae*) is to serve the kingdom of God's left hand, the secular order. Nevertheless right hand or left, both kingdoms, as both collections, are the gift of the

<sup>31</sup> *Syntagma Musicum, Bd. I*, pp. 146-147.



one and same Lord, as in the one Lord Jesus Christ, humanity and divinity are one person.

*Johannes Kepler—Music in the Heavens*

It might seem a strange departure to consider the thought in Johannes Kepler's *Harmonices Mundi* together with other Lutheran musicians. Kepler had several conflicts with the theologians of the Lutheran Church, conflicts which appeared already during his studies for the Holy Ministry at Tübingen. He also hesitated to subscribe to the Formula of Concord because of the doctrine of the ubiquity of the body of Christ.

While the Formula of Concord does not use the term "ubiquity" when speaking of the communication of attributes, it does declare that the divine attribute of omnipresence is communicated to the human nature in Christ. The Reformed theologians, who rejected such a communication because "the finite is not capable of the infinite," caricatured the Lutheran view as a localized omnipresence of the human nature of Christ, as though the body of Christ were a stretch toy capable of being stretched large enough to encompass every corner of the universe. The Lutherans countered with a Scriptural argument which limited Christ's local presence to His earthly ministry, while after His resurrection He is illocally present. The place He occupies is local but the space of His presence is not identical with the space of that place. For proof of this position the Lutherans pointed to the Gospel record of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances. The Reformed were not satisfied with this explanation, calling it a game with words. Kepler appears to have agreed with the Reformed.

Kepler's hesitation to subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions, particularly the



Formula of Concord, would ultimately result in his ban from the Lord's Supper in Lutheran congregations. These circumstances would appear to make Kepler something of a hostile witness to a Lutheran aesthetic in music that is Christologically grounded. Nevertheless, in reading Kepler's own words this apparent contradiction soon disappears.

From the vantage point of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, several centuries removed from Kepler's era, it may be seen from his own words that his conflict with the orthodox Lutheran theologians was a conflict over subscription to the verbal expression of the doctrine of ubiquity, and not over the substance of the doctrine itself. The historical setting of the conflict may have been in the arena of doctrinal formulations and the polemics of crypto-Calvinism within Lutheranism of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, but Kepler's own writing reveals that he held far more in common with the contested doctrine than perhaps he and the theologians would have conceded.

There is a Christological basis for Kepler's theory of celestial harmony. Employing ideas he borrowed from Nicholas of Cusa, Kepler held that a sphere is the perfect geometrical symbol of the Holy Trinity. The center point of the sphere is God the Father. The surface of the sphere is God the Son, with God the Holy Spirit indicated by the equi-distance of all points on the surface from the center point. The unity of the three divine Persons is shown in that the sphere could not be without all three (center point, surface and equi-distance) simultaneously.

Now as to the Incarnation, a straight line, being an element of bodily form, when rotated upon itself creates a plane. This plane, if it cuts the sphere, creates a circle. This circle created by the bodily plane and sphere becomes the perfect symbol of the Incarnation of the Son who is both within the sphere of the Holy Trinity and yet



upon the plane of the circle of bodily form. For Kepler's theory, the circle geometrically bears the pure harmonies, which then by virtue of the Incarnation means that God and man, because of the union of the divine and human in Christ, may share in this harmony.<sup>32</sup>

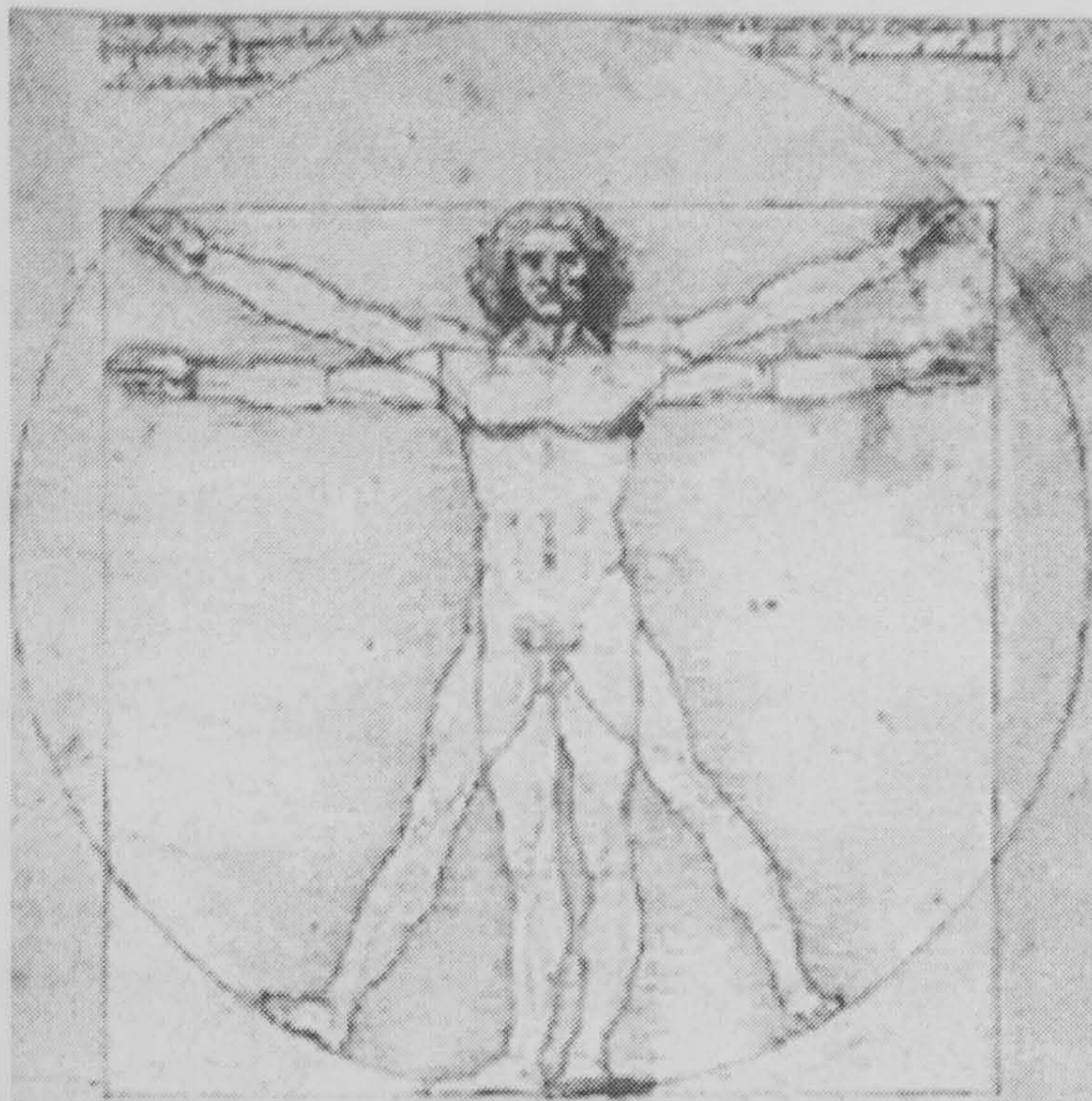


Figure 5 Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of ideal human proportions, employing circular and square planes

The doctrine of the ubiquity of the human body of Christ is confessed by the Lutheran Church to maintain the personal union of Christ with the *communicatio idiomatum* between the divine and human natures in the one person Christ. Kepler refused to subscribe to this Christological doctrine, unable to accept that "the finite is capable of the infinite." Yet in the language of his Trinitarian and Christological geometry, he does in fact support by analogy the personal union of the human and divine, with the communication of attributes. The intersection of sphere and plane implies that one cannot separate the two without destroying the harmony, much as the

<sup>32</sup> See Max Caspar, *Kepler*, trans. C. Doris Hellman (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993), p. 272.



inseparable union of the human and divine in Christ, as the doctrine of ubiquity confesses, maintains the “harmony” of human salvation.<sup>33</sup>

Kepler himself allowed certain ambiguities between the empirical and the intuitive.

Although these words [*i.e.*, the chapter title: ‘In the Celestial Harmonies Which Planet Sings Soprano, Which Alto, Which Tenor, and Which Bass?'] are applied to human voices... [and] ...although there is no such cause in the heavens, as in human singing, for requiring a definite number of voices in order to make consonance...*I do not know why but nevertheless* [emphasis added] this wonderful congruence with human song has such a strong effect upon me that I am compelled to pursue this part of the comparison, also, even without any solid natural cause.<sup>34</sup>

He is willing to accept without natural, empirical evidence what he intuitively concludes. In this his method is like that of the theologians whose doctrine of the ubiquity of the human body of Christ follows, without empirical evidence, upon the basis of the personal union and upon the communication of attributes in the theanthropic Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

What, then, is the basic purpose behind Kepler’s *Harmonices*?

Of all the manifestations of harmony in the physical world, the most sublime were surely those hiding in the proportions of the heavens. It took no great originality to suspect that the heavens had been laid out according to some plan, and no great curiosity to want to discover that plan. The problem was only to discern the proportions themselves.<sup>35</sup>

This is what the mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler set out to do. His work was not to prove the existence of God or the reality of musical sound in the

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<sup>33</sup> Given these thoughts one might wish that the orthodox theologians and Kepler had pondered each other’s positions more deeply instead of contributing another tragic episode to the conflicts between theology and science.

<sup>34</sup> Johannes Kepler, *Harmonies of the World, Bk 5* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1995), p. 209.

<sup>35</sup> Bruce Stephenson, *The Music of the Heavens: Kepler’s Harmonic Astronomy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 64.



movement of the planets. Instead, Kepler endeavored to know the order of creation because by faith he believed that the God who had created the heavens and the earth could be known in that creation. Furthermore, Kepler concluded that it was possible to know this created order because “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

There is a provisional element in this Christologically derived harmony of the spheres. This provisional element, which is a consequence of the Christian understanding of the “now/not yet” paradox of the eschaton, revealed with Jesus’ resurrection of the dead, is what affirms Kepler’s desire and ability to deduce a musical order in the heavenly realms, without at the same time requiring the design to be the final, infallible answer. (This is one of the reasons why the Lutherans were quicker than others to accept the Copernican heliocentric understanding of the solar system over the Ptolemaic geocentric view.)

It is only in the eschaton, in the fulfillment of all things on the Last Day, that we human beings will fully know all things as they are truly known. Yet already now, because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the eschaton has arrived in Him, although simultaneously not yet for creation. As Jesus’ resurrection bestows a retroactive confirmation on all that He said and did leading up to Easter, so the eschaton (revealed on Easter) will confirm, retroactively, Jesus’ resurrection and all that now is “groaning toward liberation” in creation.

The incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth forms the point of reference in relation to which the world’s course has its unity and on the basis of which every event and every figure in creation is what it is [including the phenomenon of music]. Because Jesus’ unity with God is first decided by His resurrection [the Incarnation is known by the Resurrection], only through Jesus’ resurrection is the creation of the world fulfilled.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, pp. 396.



Not only “is the creation of the world fulfilled” in Jesus’ resurrection, but also this fulfillment implies that the phenomena of the created world—music included—find ultimate meaning in Jesus’ resurrection. Kepler’s *Harmonices* proceeds by analogy, but in view of the eschatological fulfillment revealed proleptically in Jesus’ resurrection, there is the provisional possibility that eschatological reality is present in Kepler’s analogy. The just continue to live by faith.

Building upon, yet surpassing, the Pythagorean musical theory of the mathematical ratios in the vibrations of a string, Kepler deduced various ratios from among the movements of the six, then known, planets—ratios developed from their respective distances from the sun, their sizes relative to each other, the velocities of their rotations around the sun, their relationship with each other as neighboring planets—based upon the mathematical proportions of regular polyhedrons. The resulting harmonic correspondences could be placed on a musical staff. (*Fig. 6, below*)

“The harmonic progression that Kepler assigns to the planetary velocities in this theory is constrained by his desire to obtain a pleasing chord.”<sup>37</sup> This was 1599.

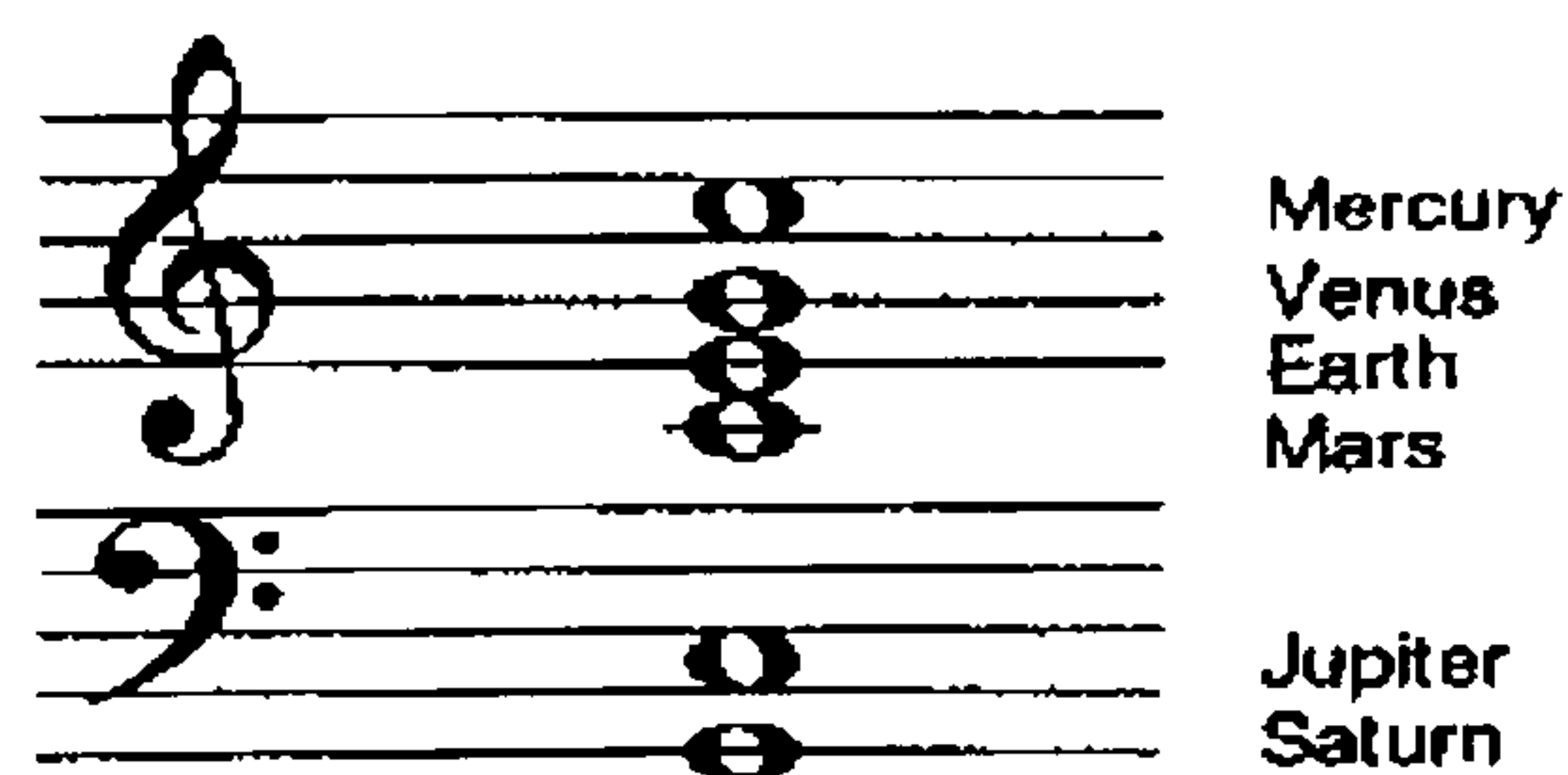


Figure 6 Kepler’s planetary chord

In 1619 the five books of the *Harmonices Mundi* were published.

The principle theses of its five books were that certain ratios, arising from the eternal geometry of regular polygons, were particularly noble; that the influence of music on the human soul depended upon these ratios...and that these same ratios had been systematically embodied in

<sup>37</sup> Stephenson, *The Music of the Heavens*, p. 93.



the creation of the solar system.<sup>38</sup>

In this Kepler concluded that the musical intervals of major and minor thirds and sixths were consonances, in the same way that the system of “just” intonation<sup>39</sup> then in use likewise deemed these intervals consonances. With thirds and sixths as consonances, that is, as aesthetically pleasing sounds, just intonation was highly conducive to polyphony. “By creating polyphony musicians are expressing in analogy [an *analogia entis*] the innermost secrets of creation.”<sup>40</sup> For Kepler the gift of creation itself was embodied in music as the expressive gift of the Creator, who Himself by the Incarnation is embodied in human flesh and blood in His creation.

The staves [*Fig. 7* next page] in the motions of the heavens” thus summarize the harmonic proportions Kepler has found in the extreme motions of the planets. It is not, unfortunately, a summary that becomes clearer the more carefully one looks at it, until one has looked at it very carefully indeed. Placement of clef signatures on the staff was more flexible in Kepler’s time, so the shifting of the signature to align the *durus* and *mollis* [roughly equivalent to the modern ‘major’ and ‘minor’] motions no doubt confused his contemporaries less than us. His main point, at any rate, is simple: the extreme planetary motions yield most of the proportions among the notes of the *durus* scale and also most of the proportions among the notes of the *mollis* scale. Kepler makes a strong claim in chapter 5 [of *Harmonices Mundi*, Book 5] that the apparent planetary motions embody both types of musical scale.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Stephenson. *The Music of the Heavens*, p. 118.

<sup>39</sup> “Just intonation is a system of intonation and tuning in which all the intervals are derived from the natural fifth and the natural third... [It] has the advantage of giving the three fundamental triads, c-e-g, f-a-c, and g-b-d as ‘natural triads’ which are more ‘euphonius’ than those in well-tempered tuning. However its disadvantages are much more numerous...the tones of the C-major scale include one ‘dissonant’ fifth, namely d-a...modulation is impossible. In chordal music, just intonation produces pure triads and has, therefore, been considered ideal for a *cappella* music...but at the expense of a constant lowering of pitch.” *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. Willi Apel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 449. Equal temperament, or well-tempered scales, divides the octave into twelve equal semitones, making only the octave acoustically pure. The modern ear has become accustomed to the impure thirds of this system, in which the advantages outweigh its flaws. See *Harvard Dictionary*, p. 836.

<sup>40</sup> Stephenson. *The Music of the Heavens*, p. 170.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.



Did this theory lead to a Keplerian system of musical composition? No, rather it was Kepler’s brilliant mind, together with his intuition and his devout faith working in concert, that moved him “to think God’s thoughts after Him.” His theories were not written out to prove but to discover and to understand the implications of what the Creator had fashioned.

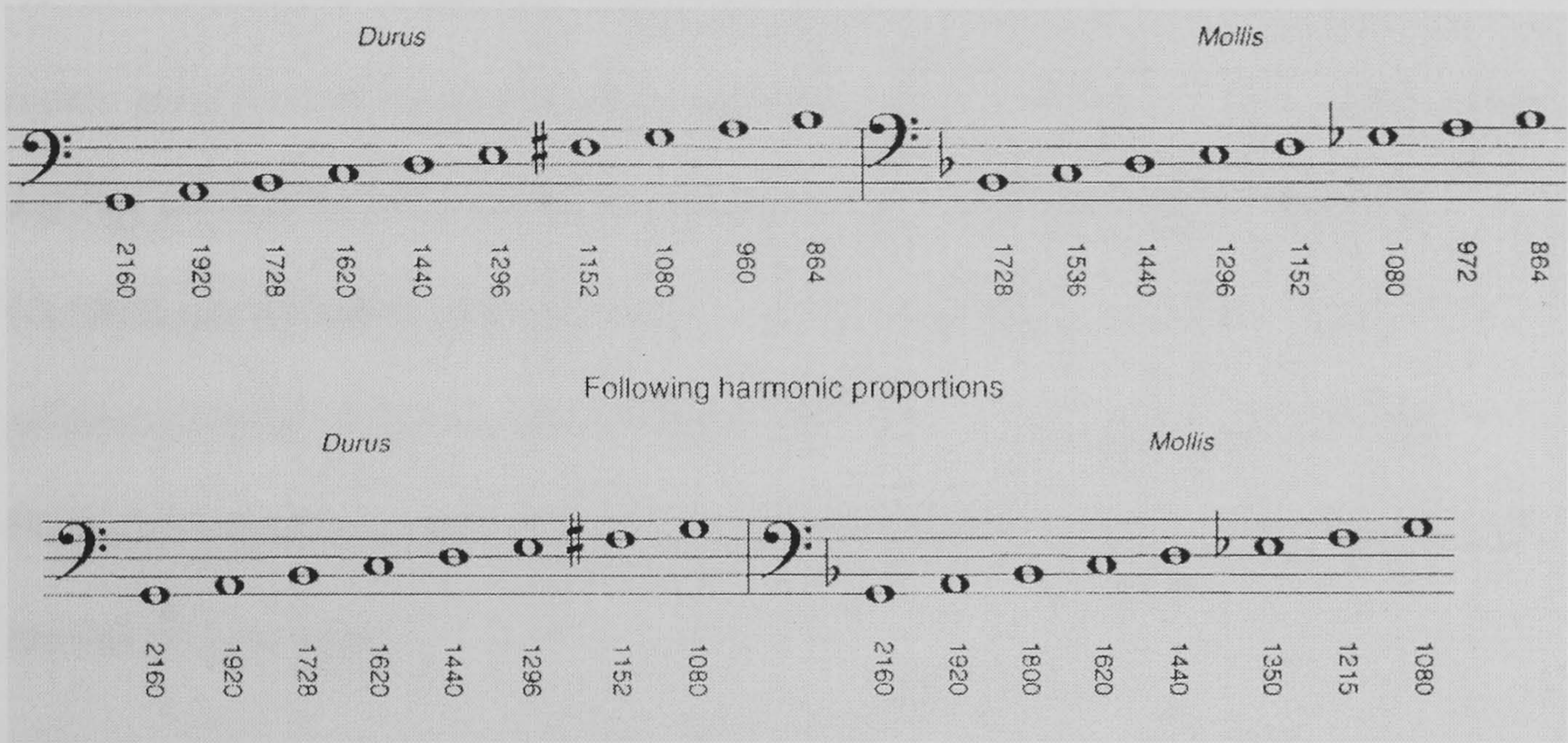


Figure7 The harmony of heaven and earth; the numbers are the lengths of vibrating string to achieve the pitch.

The discovery of other planets—Neptune, Uranus and Pluto—after Kepler’s death would shatter his polyhedron theory of the solar system. Since Kepler’s theory was based on the five relationships between the six known planets, perfectly congruent with the five regular polyhedrons, the later discovery of additional planets resulted in no congruence with the regular polyhedrons. Additionally the shift in musical composition from the use of just intonation to the use of equal temperament would alter the mathematical ratios in the intervals of musical pitch, away from a “natural” interval structure to an artificially constructed system of pitch intervals. Nevertheless, the intuition among Lutheran musicians and theorists would remain, that the order of the universe is knowable because the Creator took on human flesh to dwell among the



inhabitants of the created world.

The Christ who reigns as King, as noted earlier, reigns not by law but by the priestly reconciliation which He has accomplished in His own body on the cross. Because Christ has reconciled all things in heaven and on earth now and because, simultaneously, not yet until the Last Day are all things fully known which have been reconciled in Christ, a Lutheran Kepler or Praetorius, by means of this Christology, can rightly perceive that reconciliation by *analogia entis* in the creation now, although any analogy will not be free from its provisional nature until the eschaton. Kepler's Christologically-informed intuition which was expressed geometrically and arithmetically in his *Harmonices Mundi* is the same Christological intuition that Praetorius expressed theologically in his *Musae Sionae et Aoinae*. "Heaven and earth are full of Your glory."<sup>42</sup>

#### *Heinrich Schütz—Many Influences, One Musical Office*

Heinrich Schütz successfully embodied a characteristic of Lutheran church music: the embracing of the new at the same time that the older traditions are cherished. It was a characteristic already present among Lutheran church musicians from the beginning, evidenced in the collaboration between Martin Luther and Johann Walter. For Schütz, the new trends in musical expression coming out of Italy were ideal for the older tradition of the rhetorical nature of Lutheran church music.

Already in the first generation of Lutheran church musicians *musica poetica* was a valued dimension of the nature of music as it was studied together with the

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<sup>42</sup> From the *Sanctus*, see Isaiah 6.



pragmatic dimension of music known as *musica practica*.

Poetics is that which is not content with just the understanding of the thing nor with only its performance [*i.e.*, *musica practica*], but which leaves something more after the labor of performance, as when music or a song of musicians is composed by someone whose goal is total performance and accomplishment. It consists of making or putting together more in this work which afterwards leaves the work perfect and absolute, which otherwise is artificially like the dead. Hence the poetic musician is one who is trained in leaving something more in his achievement.<sup>43</sup>

The “something more” which Listenius mentions is that which is created (ποίησις<sup>44</sup>) for the hearer, namely faith which comes by hearing the Word in and with the music, by the participation of music in the proclamation of the Word. As the composer sets the text, conveying the musical interpretation of that text, as the musician performs the music and the listener hears it there is faith, both *fides quae creditur*, the faith, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as *fides qua creditur*, the confident trusting faith in this Jesus Christ.

And if we examine music more closely, we will surely find very little difference between its nature and that of oratory. For just as the art of oratory derives its power not from a simple collection of simple words, or from a proper yet rather plain construction of periods, or from their meticulous yet bare and uniform connection, but rather from those elements where there is an underlying grace and elegance due to ornament and to weighty words of wit, and where periods are rounded with emphatic words—so also, this art of music, surpassing the bare combination of pure consonances, offers to the senses a work composed of a mixture of perfect and imperfect consonances and of dissonances. This cannot but touch one’s heart. After much study it has been observed that this art is capable of depicting the inanimate so that it appears no different from animate, and that it can employ the

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<sup>43</sup> Nicolaus Listenius, *Music [Musica, 1537]*, trans. Albert Seay (Colorado Springs: The Colorado College Music Press, 1975), p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> See Oswald Bayer, *Gott als Autor* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1999), for a discussion of the concept of ποίησις in Lutheran theology. Bayer writes, “‘Author’ and ‘Poet’ is God in the *active* voice: as Lord and Refuge for the trustworthy Word. This is given with His name. From God’s name—and *therewith* from His essence and His being—it has been spoken when God’s praise in the hymn of creation becomes so established: ‘For the Word of the Lord is right, and all His works are sure.’ (Ps 33:4)” *Ibid.*, p. 3.



same stimulus whereby rhetoric, through *prosopopoeia*, can present lifeless things as though they were alive.<sup>45</sup>

Schütz drinks deeply of this art bringing the influence of the Italian style of music into the northern German chapels and courts, as well as into the Scandinavian countries. Yet he was no mere imitator of what he learned from his studies in Italy with the famed Giovanni Gabrieli and later with Claudio Monteverdi. By welding the polyphonic techniques of Lutheran church music together with the new music from Italy, Heinrich Schütz fashioned “something more” for faith and for art.

In 1609 Heinrich Schütz, studying law at the University of Marburg, departed for Venice at the urging of the Elector to study music with the renowned Giovanni Gabrieli. In Venice the humanist education in which young Schütz was excelling at Marburg—especially in the languages of Latin, French, Greek and, in time, Hebrew<sup>46</sup>—were met by Italian “madrigalism” in musical composition.

To be sure, this early baroque music is characterized, on the one hand, by joy in the display of brilliance and power, which thus leads to efflorescence of the psalms of praise. On the other hand, the awakening individualism allows the Scriptural understanding of the musicians to become ever more personal and subjective. In the case of lesser artists the conflict between the world of great and small things comes to be felt as an alarming chasm. The wide, inclusive point of view of a Schütz, a Bach, and a Handel was, however, to manifest itself in taking this small world of personal matters—which daily threatened to become more ‘subjective,’ more problematic, and thus ever more ‘microcosmic’—and perceiving it, encompassing it, and formulating it as a manifestation of the objective, the absolute, the macrocosmic, and, above all, the eternally divine. Perhaps in this very thing—the harmonizing of the seemingly irreconcilable antipodes, man and

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<sup>45</sup> Joachim Burmeister, *Musical Poetics [Musica Poetica, 1592]*, trans. Benito V. Rivera (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 233. *Prosopopoeia* “is a personification ... or when we attribute the faculty of sensation to an inanimate thing.” *Ibid.*, n8.

<sup>46</sup> Leo Schrade, “Heinrich Schütz and Johann S. Bach in Protestant Liturgy, *The Musical Heritage of the Church, 1947* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), pp. 44-45. “The musician is the discoverer of the truth of the meanings inherent in words; and he cannot discover the truth unless he masters the original languages. To be the faithful interpreter of the connotations of the texts is a task of the composer that Schütz set forth because he was a Lutheran musician.” *Ibid.*, p. 45.



universe—Heinrich Schütz was the most astounding of the three.<sup>47</sup>

In his “harmonizing of irreconcilables” Schütz demonstrates that he is of a similar spirit as Martin Luther in his *simul*.

da le ti - greir - ca - ne, e da le ti - gre,  
zu der grau - sen Ti - ger, wardst zu der Ti - ger,  
ca - ne, e da le ti - greir - ca - ne, ir -  
Ti - ger, wardst zu der grau - sen Ti - ger, der  
e wardst da le ti - greir - ca - ne  
zu der grau - sen Ti - ger,  
ca - ne, e da le ti - greir -  
Ti - ger, wardst zu der grau - sen  
ti - greir - ca - ne, e da le ti -  
grau - sen Ti - ger, wardst zu der grau -

e da le ti - greir - ca - ne il  
wardst zu der grau - sen Ti - ger Milch -  
ca - ne, e da le ti - greir - ca - nell lat -  
Ti - ger, wardst zu der grau - sen Ti - ger Milch -  
e da le ti - greir - ca - ne il  
wardst zu der grau - sen Ti - ger Milch -  
ca - ne il lat - tu ha - ve -  
Ti - ger Milch - kind er - ko -  
greir - ca - ne il lat - tu ha -  
sen Ti - ger Milch - kind er -

Figure 8 From the madrigal, *D'orrida selce alpine*. In this example Schütz demonstrates “passive” word-painting by using augmented triads, false relations, sudden shifts in tonal center and postponed cadences to portray the emotion of his lady’s hard-heartedness; she acts as though she had drunk from birth “the milk of wild tigers,” *e da le tigre ircane il late havesti*. (“Active” word-painting sets such things as wind, laughter, running, etc.)

While this passionate style of musical composition in Venice was inspiring to the young Schütz, his teacher, Giovanni Gabrieli, began the studies in composition with lessons in the older style of polyphony, especially that of Palestrina. Until a

<sup>47</sup> Moser, *Heinrich Schütz*, pp. 248-249.



student fully grasped the old, he was not ready to undertake the new.<sup>48</sup> This Gabrieli-instilled compositional philosophy would prepare Schütz for the pivotal role he would play in Lutheran church music.

There is no doubt that in the creative activity of Heinrich Schütz there was to a large extent a fusion between the various new stimuli introduced from Italy and the firmly established practice of art in Germany during the preceding epoch... However, his independent assimilation of the new elements and the indisputably greater depth of his conception undoubtedly prepared the way for the emancipation of German art, since he does not merely imitate but continues and develops.<sup>49</sup>

The “madrigalism” of Italy inspired this composer who excelled in languages, this Lutheran church musician who excelled in the language of the Word.

While his older contemporary, Michael Praetorius, has been dubbed the champion of the Lutheran chorale, Schütz brought his considerable musical gifts to bear upon settings of the Psalter.<sup>50</sup> His first collection of Psalm settings, *The Psalms of David* (1619), reflects Schütz’s experiences in Italy. The collection includes polychoral compositions utilizing a small *Coro favorito* of highly accomplished singers set in contrast to a larger *Coro capella* which provided the added strength of numbers. These choirs are supported by large numbers of instrumentalists—flutes, bassoons, trumpets and trombones, strings and organ. Such musical forces reflect the

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<sup>48</sup> See Basil Smallman, *Schütz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Hugo Riemann, *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*, II 3, p. 23; quoted in Moser, *Heinrich Schütz*, p. 251.

<sup>50</sup> There has been in the past a fierce debate about Schütz’s use of chorale melodies. Moser writes. “Ph. Spitta had somewhat undervalued this relation of Schütz to the chorale and Alfred Einstein practically denied that any such relationship existed.... In opposition to this I have emphasized that such an interpretation approaches a tendentious uprooting of Schütz from the spiritual world of the Protestantism of his time... of course, the church hymn represents a much more modest proportion in the case of Schütz than in the case of M. Praetorius.... Nevertheless, when Schütz uses a chorale melody, he stands in the line which leads from Johann Walter to Seb. Bach.” Moser, *Heinrich Schütz*, p. 478. Friedrich Blume employs similar language. See Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, p. 219. While Praetorius and Schütz employ chorale melodies differently in their compositions, they both employ the melodies as aural references to the chorale texts associated with those melodies.



sonorous tone colors of the music which the Gabrielis (Giovanni and his uncle, Andrea) had written for St. Mark's in Venice.

Figure 9 shows a musical score for a setting of Psalm 150. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes three staves: 'tbns. 1+2' (Trombones 1 and 2), 'Tenors 1+2' (Tenors 1 and 2), and 'tbn. 3 b.c.' (Trombone 3, basso continuo). The lyrics 'lo - bet ihn mit Po - sau -' are written below the first two staves. The second system continues the music with the lyrics 'nen' on the first two staves. The bottom staff of the second system has figured bass notation: 6 4, 5 3, 6 4, 5 3, 4 2, 5 3, 4 2, 5 3, 4 2.

Figure 9 From the setting of Psalm 150 in the *Psalms of David*, 1619. Three trombones accompany the solo tenors who sing “praise Him with the trombones.”

It is the texts of these Psalm settings, however, which dictate the plan of the musical forces. Of the twenty-six settings in *The Psalms of David*, twenty are settings of complete Psalms, three are passages from various Psalms, and three are texts from Isaiah, Jeremiah and a chorale paraphrase of Psalm 103:1-6. Generally, the shorter texts demonstrate a restrained scoring, using fewer voices and instruments, together with the older motet style of Renaissance polyphony, while the psalms of praise incorporate the largest number of musical forces and Venetian-style antiphonal scoring.<sup>51</sup> Schütz's concern for the text, above all, can be seen in his words about

<sup>51</sup> “Here we see Schütz, as a master of tone between high Renaissance and early baroque, taking a



tempo in the preface to this collection.

I have arranged these present *Psalms* of mine in *stylo recitative* (to the present day almost unknown in Germany), which, in my opinion, is the most appropriate form for the composition of psalms. Because of the large number of words, one must engage, therefore, kindly request those who have no knowledge of this method that in presenting my *Psalms* they should not indulge in undue haste but should maintain a discreet mean, so that the words may be recited by the singers in a manner intelligible to the listeners. If this procedure is not observed, a very unpleasant discordance will result, and there will appear nothing other than a *Battaglia di Mosche* or ‘battle of insects,’ contrary to the intention of the author.<sup>52</sup>

Schütz’s concern extends not only to the text of the singers, but includes the whole work. His musical/rhetorical devices in the musical composition would likewise become unintelligible if the tempo were too fast.

This concern for the effect of the performance, coupled with the daring nature of the newer Italian influences which Schütz incorporates into his compositions, has led some scholars to conclude that Schütz was more concerned about art than faith.

Schütz’s beginnings in the composition of religious music are predominately, if not exclusively, artistic. The clearer he became about the artistic problems of style, the more he grew to be master over them, the more he opened his work to the realization of liturgical ideas. Schütz’s path leads from art to liturgy.<sup>53</sup>

Schrade’s comment betrays the difficulty of considering the artistic and liturgical nature of music simultaneously. For Schrade, music’s art must be tamed, “mastered,” by the order in liturgy, rather than an order derived from the Gospel embodied in music’s artistry as Schütz recognized. Schütz’s musical art is a manifestation of the divine Artist hidden in the composer’s work (*genus tapeinotikon*).

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hand in the great tonal masses, which he weighs and distributes with a view to their effectiveness according to nearness and distance, weakness and strength, darkness and light...” Moser. *Heinrich Schütz*, p. 295.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Moser. *Heinrich Schütz*, p. 293.

<sup>53</sup> Leo Schrade, *The Musical Heritage of the Church*, 1947. p. 51.



Schütz does not so much “put behind him” his Italian Renaissance experiences, but comes to see how this musical style, too, may participate in the proclamation of the divine Word (*genus maiestaticum*).

Inherent in this creative tension, and its attendant criticism from the theologians, is the effect of changing musical influences on defining an *analogia entis* in a Lutheran aesthetic. As noted in Chapter 1 (see pages 40-41), Georg Rhau, Philipp Melanchthon and others recognized that one of the consequences of music united with the Word of Gospel is that this music will have a proper proportion, a *harmonia*, which embodies the *harmonia* of the Gospel. Since the music of the Netherlandish School was then in fashion this proper proportion was associated with the finer examples of those composers, especially the music of Josquin. As the Italian influences of Monteverdi and the Gabriellis grew more dominant, they impacted the understanding of musical proportion.

A Lutheran Christology in music derives proportion and *harmonia* from the Christ, who as King orders all things, by His reconciling all things to God as Priest, and making known this reconciled order to all nations as Prophet. That music will have proportion and *harmonia* is a result of the communication of Christ’s Office to music. What that proportion and *harmonia* will be in any given era is music’s art communicated to Christ’s Office. When the communicated attributes of proportion and *harmonia* are according to the Gospel each era will hear music descriptive of that Gospel, however different the musical styles of the eras may be. When proportion and *harmonia* are prescribed according to the Law, dictating *a priori* the acceptable musical styles, such music will not progress. The *communication idomatum* makes the church musician a theologian of the cross, recognizing the creative Word hidden in the



challenges of a changing and evolving art of music.

So how did the younger Schütz with the Italian musical accent acquire the maturity of expression in this musical *theologia crucis* so that “all the foreign elements [of Italian musical composition] are melted into an epoch-making synthesis in the spirit of German Protestant church music”?<sup>54</sup> Schütz himself provides an answer in the preface to his *Geistliche Chormusik* of 1648.

...no musician trained in a good school in the most difficult study of composition [*Studio Contrapuncti*], can start on any other kind of composition and handle it correctly unless he has first trained himself sufficiently in the style without *Bassum Continuum* and has also mastered all the prerequisites for regular composition, such as: disposition of the modes [*Dispositiones Modorum*]; simple, mixed and inverted fugues [*Fugae Simples, mixtae, inversae*]; double counterpoint [*Contrapunctum dupler*]; different styles for different kinds of music [*Differentia Styli in arte Musica diversi*]; part-writing [*Modulatio Vocum*]; connection of themes [*Connerio subiectorum*], and so on, of which the learned theoreticians [*Theorici*] write profusely and in which students of counterpoint [*Studiosi Contrapuncti*] are being orally trained in technical schools [*Schola Practica*]. No composition of even an experienced composer lacking such a background (even though it may appear as heavenly harmony to ears not properly trained in music) can stand up or be judged better than an empty shell.<sup>55</sup>

For Schütz it was the strength of the musical tradition he inherited as a Lutheran church musician which insured that his Italian studies would neither erase that former tradition nor by-pass it altogether. The Office of Kantor, the *Predigtamt* in music, places on the Office bearer the obligation of proclaiming the Word of Christ in music contemporary to the kantor while receiving the music of the past which has proclaimed that Word, and guarding that deposit of tradition as one accountable to the Lord who has bestowed the Office on the kantor. Yet because the Office is also a gift

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<sup>54</sup> Carl Schalk, *Music in Early Lutheranism: Shaping the Tradition (1524-1672)* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), p. 172.

<sup>55</sup> Heinrich Schütz, “Vorwort,” trans. Sam Morgenstern, *Geistliche Chormusik 1648, Neue Ausgabe*



of the Lord, as it is an obligation, it is an Office of freedom, granting the Office bearer, the kantor, independence from the binding trends and conflicts of the kantor’s own time and previous eras. A dutiful servant and yet also a free lord; as the Christ is in His Office, so also is the kantor, whose Office is a participation in Christ’s. Such a



Figure 10 The conclusion of *Fili mi, Absalon*, No. 10, in *Symphoniae sacrae I*, 1629. The sense of despair is heard by the use of trombones, while the bass soloist sings increasingly wider, descending intervals with the cry “Absalon.”

*sämtlicher Werke*, Bd. 5 (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1965), p. VI.



Christological view of Italian music in German church life (and, through Schütz's contacts in the north, in Scandinavian church life) can be heard in Schütz's *Symphoniae sacrae*.

Mogens Pederson

Nu be-de vi den hel-lig-aand /

Alt

Nu be-de vi den hel-lig-aand /

Alt om den chris-te-li-ge tro oc ret

om den Chris-te-li-ge tro Alt om den Chris-te-li-ge tro oc

Alt om den chris-te-li-ge tro

Alt om den chris-te-li-ge tro oc ret

Figure 1 A motet by Schütz's Danish contemporary and fellow-student under Gabrieli, Mogens Pederson. The sonority of the Italian style was finding its way into the Nordic Lutheran Churches not only through the music of Schütz but also through gifted native-born composers, like Pederson, who studied in Italy.

The three collections of "sacred/spiritual concertos" (*Symphoniae sacrae*) exhibit the impact of Schütz's second trip to Italy in 1628 and 1629 "in order that I might there investigate the new advances and present practices in music which had developed there since my first sojourn."<sup>56</sup> Claudio Monteverdi was the teacher of

<sup>56</sup> Heinrich Schütz, "Widmungsvorrede," *Symphonae Sacrae III* (1650), *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*, Bd. 18 (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1989), p. XV.



influence for Schütz on this second journey.

Concerning the Italian style, Schütz notes in the preface to the first collection:

Staying in Venice with old friends, I found the manner of musical composition [*modulandi rationem*] somewhat changed [from the first trip there in 1609]. They have partially abandoned the old church modes [*antiquos numeros ex parte desposuisse*] while seeking to charm modern ears with new titillations [*hodiernis auribus recenti allusuram titillatione*]. I have devoted my mind and my powers to present to you [Crown Prince Johann Georg II] for your information something in accordance with this artistic development [*norma*].<sup>57</sup>

Schütz desires not to lose any of the “charm” this new music holds for “modern ears” while at the same time he desires to do much more than “titillate” those ears. It is an artistic balance not successfully observed by others.

A dark period of musical/ethnic rivalry developed in Johann Georg II’s court following Schütz’s return from Venice. Because the Italian musical style was so new to the German musicians, Schütz had suggested that a few Italian musicians, well-trained in this style, should be employed in Dresden to teach the new music. Schütz’s intention had been to wed the Italian style with the German. Others, however, took matters further and the Italian influence soon overran the musical scene in Dresden. Schütz was blamed as the cause for this musical invasion.

I can gain no access to Your Royal Highness with my current most humble memorandum plaintively to report the extent to which I am given to understand how more and more each day that (regarding Your Highness’s musicians from Italy described here and those installed in the electoral court ensemble) not only repeatedly unpleasant judgment is passed on me by various ecclesiastical and secular persons but in addition, to my particular great surprise, I have become aware that I am considered to be, and slandered as, the cause and instigator of this change.... Indeed I know nothing of the sort but remember only this: That now twenty years ago or more, at His [Highness’s] most gracious command, I was to draw up a report in what manner an ensemble might be assembled and what musicians were necessary to complete it. At

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<sup>57</sup> Heinrich Schütz, “Widmungsvorrede,” trans. Carl Pfatteicher *Symphoniae Sacrae I (1629)*, Bd. 14 (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1965). p. XI.



that time I had suggested for the vocalists the possibility of an Italian from whom the choir boys and German singers could learn good style, and a similarly qualified Italian for the instrumentalists as well.... Moreover I swear to God that I for my part do not oppose Your Serene Highness's newly installed Italian director of music [Giovanni Andrea Bontempi] (even though for me and other Germans here it serves more to the detriment of our abilities than the advancement of them).<sup>58</sup>

That this antagonism between the new Italian style and the older German style of music was still an intensely debated issue can be seen in that Martin Geier, the court preacher in Dresden, felt compelled to address the subject in the sermon he preached at Schütz's funeral. Criticizing those "who bring Babylon's songs into the house of God," Geier, the Saxon Lutheran preacher, has the Italians (who are also Roman Catholic) in mind.

Many sing more for the melody's sake, perhaps because the song is new with a fine, brisk way about it and a pleasant worldly ring, but who cares about the content? People like that remind me of a man who has a great fondness for new styles in dress.... God defend us from the rascal that is hidden in such new clothes and from the misery and harm he afterwards causes for his host.... Here there should be mentioned what so many old and new teachers of the church have complained of, that is, the unspiritual, dance-like, yes, even ridiculous, modes of song and music one often gets to hear in the churches. If a man were to be brought there blindfolded, he would be quite of the opinion that he was in a theater where a ballet was to be danced or a comedy to be performed.<sup>59</sup>

In Geier's mind if the music of the church was to be faithfully Lutheran, it music be German, it must be of the style of Luther's time. Having separated the *singen und sagen* of Martin Luther, he set the "saying" of theology over against the "singing"

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<sup>58</sup> Schütz in a letter to Johann Georg II, August 23, 1653, in Gina Spagnoli, *Letters and Documents of Heinrich Schütz 1656-1672* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990). pp. 140-141.

<sup>59</sup> Robin A. Leaver, *Music in the Service of the Church: The Funeral Sermon for Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672)* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984). p. 42. Moser comments on Geier's sermon, "These words from the sermon which Martin Geier delivered at Schütz's funeral were addressed to the composer's younger colleagues. Perhaps what Geier said was, at that time, somewhat one-sided; perhaps it was an overstatement resulting from the visual angle of an older theologian. Still, like a flash of lightning, the words throw a bright light on the situation existing in those days." Moser, *Heinrich Schütz*, p. 702.



of music. Conversely other composers, unlike Schütz whose conception of his Office kept Luther's *singen und sagen* united, were quick to set music's "singing" over against theology's "saying." Geier's funeral sermon for Heinrich Schütz echoes the sentiments of the German Pietists who opposed "worldly" music.

The first collection of *Symphoniae sacrae* was published while Schütz was still in Italy. While the second and third collections were published in Germany (1647 and 1650 respectively), they maintain the Italian influence of the first. The texts are from the Bible—the Latin Vulgate for Part I, Luther's German translation of the Bible for Parts II and III. Concerning these musical compositions,

from the evidence provided eventually by his own work, it may be deduced that the novel features to which [Schütz] refers [in the collection's dedicatory preface] include melodic patterns with a high degree of structural symmetry and scope for graceful ornamentation; delicately varied harmonic and instrumental colour; the articulation of form by the juxtaposition of declamatory and aria styles and by contrasts of scoring and metre; and the use of immediate and long-range repetition, of both vocal and instrumental passages, to enhance formal coherence.<sup>60</sup>

The Italian-published first collection was highly successful both in Italy as well as in Germany. Schütz learned, however, that some of his compositions from the *Symphoniae sacrae I* were being performed with German texts replacing the Latin. This moved him to write the second set with German texts, though he had found that the German musicians did not do justice to the Italian style.

[Schütz] expresses concern that his fellow German musicians lack the experience to deal correctly with the latest Italian styles, particularly in the performance of 'black notes' ('schwarzen Noten,' by which he means ones of short value) in passages of rapid figuration; these, he says, are too often scampered through without proper regard to the music's steady pulse. Also he stresses, for string players, the

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<sup>60</sup> Smallman, *Schütz*, pp. 65-66.







importance of cultivating a long-drawn style of bowing, if they are to achieve the proper results and ‘avoid offending the judicious ear.’<sup>61</sup>

The use of the voices and instrumentalists reflects the maturity of Schütz’s compositional skills as he subtly brought the “titillation” of Italy to brighten the reserved German musical tradition.



Figure 12 A setting by Schütz for the *Becker Psalter*, 1628, of a paraphrase of Psalm 100. The text is set to music in lively triple meter to capture the sense of praise and joy.

Moser has summarized in lofty praise, the significance of the three parts of Schütz’s *Symphoniae sacrae*. The quotation is lengthy, but thorough:

...the slender-voiced art of Italy is reflected very clearly in the little Latin *concerti* of Schütz’s *Symphoniae sacrae I*, which, however, even in 1629 revealed a perfect equilibrium between the instrumental and the vocal elements. The second part [*Symphoniae sacrae II*] developed the linguistic and theological Germanization without surrendering the small intimate form. Only the third part [*Symphoniae sacrae III*] allows the new art to develop all the means of attaining monumental structure whereby the circle returns to the polychoral *Psalms of David*, although at a higher level.... Schütz’s *Symphoniae sacrae*, by means of their structural and antithetical [*kampflich*] insertions of the instrumental groups—which remain now vocal in character, now sprout forth in bold technique according to need—won a new freedom and mobility which allowed these works to become a strong propelling power along the important path ‘from

<sup>61</sup> Smallman, *Schütz*, p. 116.



the motet to the cantata.<sup>62</sup>

Such overflowing praise perhaps has contributed to the conclusion noted earlier that Schütz was preoccupied with his role as an innovative composer, rather than with his role as a musician within the life of the whole Church.

Schütz is, however, the greatest representative of that individualism which, founded on the Lutheran interpretation of the divine content of religious texts, is the most prominent character of seventeenth-century Protestantism.<sup>63</sup>

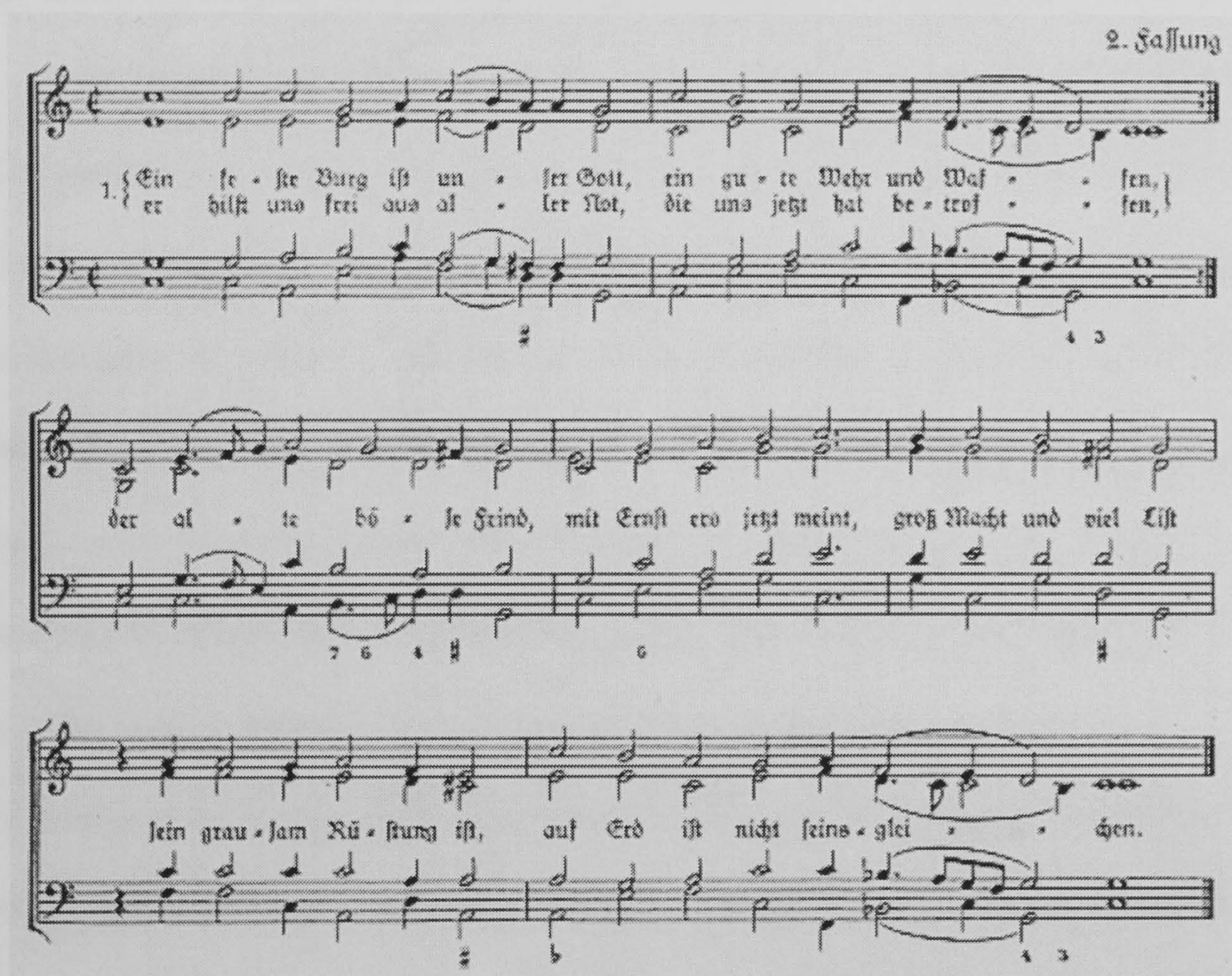


Figure 13 From the *Becker Psalter*, 1628, Schütz's harmonization of Martin Luther's musical paraphrase of Psalm 46, "A Mighty Fortress"

This conclusion, while true for artistic individualism of that time, too easily numbers Schütz among such individualists. The more accurate conclusion would be to observe how Schütz, the Lutheran, maintained a "both/and" simultaneity in church

<sup>62</sup> Moser, *Heinrich Schütz*, p. 629.

<sup>63</sup> Schrade, *The Musical Heritage of the Church*, 1947, p. 57.



music. He was both a congregational and an individual musician. Heinrich Schütz composed music in both the new Italian style and the revered German musical tradition. He wrote music, as Luther envisioned, that is simultaneously theological and artistic. His intent was to hold together both the rich past in Church music and the exciting possibilities of the musical future, the “new song” of the Gospel. To hold such a simultaneity is an *anfechtung*, a “cross” of the kantor’s Office, which is laid upon the kantor because of the Gospel, because of the Christ who shares that Office.

An engraving on the title page for the *Geistreiche Gesangbuch*, a collection of psalm paraphrases compiled by Cornelius Becker and set to music composed, and in some cases arranged, by Heinrich Schütz, captures the place the famous *Kapellmeister* would esteem for himself. The *Gesangbuch* was published in 1676, four years after Schütz’s death, by Schütz’s favorite pupil, Christoph Bernhard. In the title page print (*Fig. 14*, next page) the setting is the Dresden court chapel, and yet it is much more than a picture of historical practice at the chapel. The print is a visualization of Psalm 150. The small numbers located at various places in the engraving indicate illustrations of the verses of the paraphrase. At the same time that the engraving portrays Psalm 150, and is reminiscent of the title page print for Michael Praetorius’ *Musae Sionae*, this print also symbolizes Schütz’s own understanding of his place: a church musician in the one body of the Church.

While modesty might have prevented Schütz from placing himself in the scene, the priestly and prophetic natures of his Office did place him in the chapel. There he directs the choristers and also, by extension, his Office placed him in the Church directing the Church’s song. While the Church sings on earth, accompanied by instruments (and dance) pictured in the galleries, the music of the host of heaven,



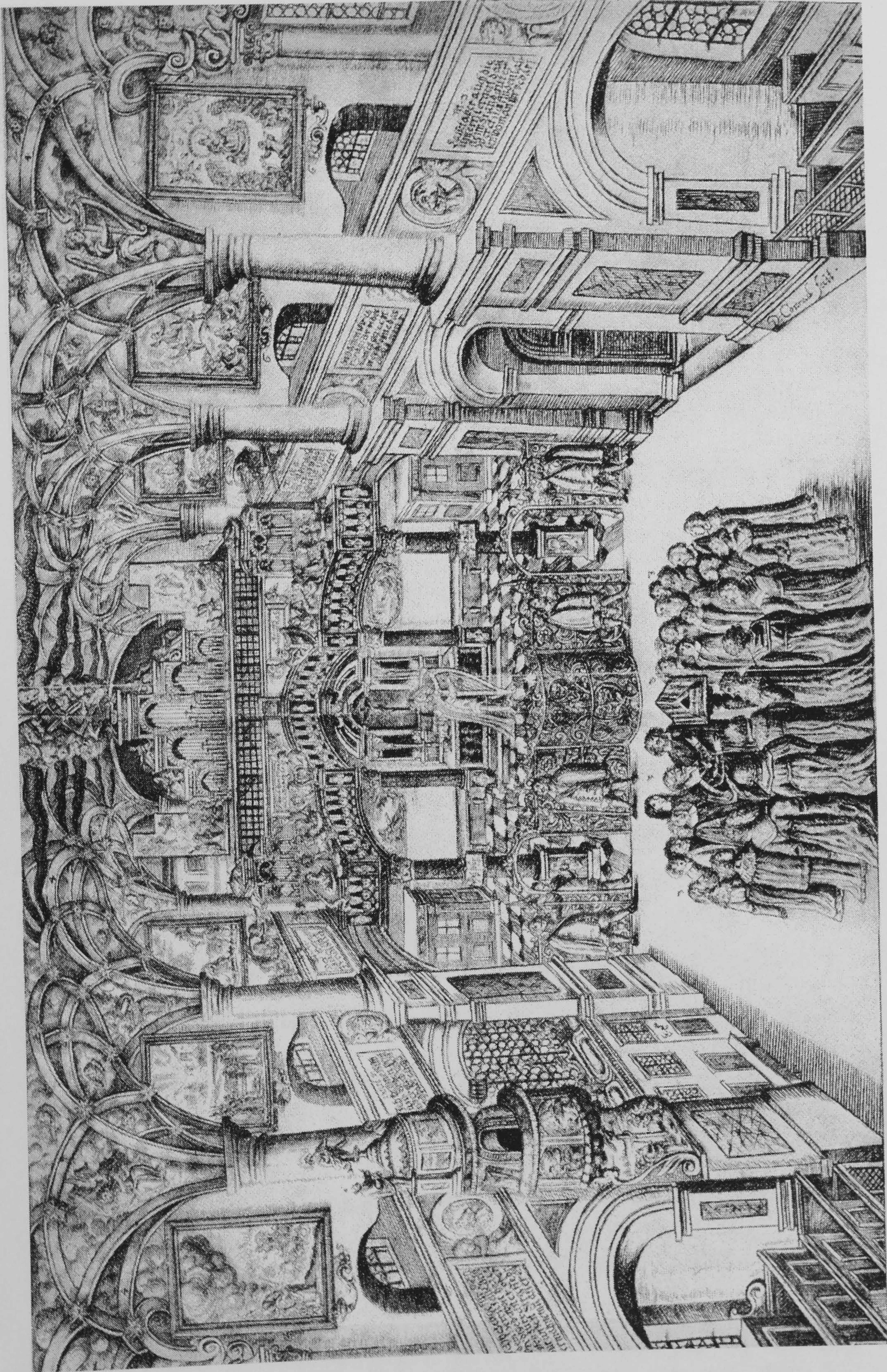


Figure 14 The title page engraving from *Geistreiche Gesangbuch*, 1576 (Schütz is portrayed conducting, lower center.)





portrayed by the musical angels above the pillars, lends its praise.

The singers standing around [Schütz] are representative of all believers and thus of all the times that this psalter was used in the court chapel and elsewhere. The same activity, the honoring of God and the praise of His mighty deeds, is engaged in by the angels in heaven and by the Old Testament worshipers (David and the musicians in the lower balconies above him, many of whom are playing percussion instruments). Also ‘modern’ wind and string instruments in the balconies above are employed in music-making. Even organs are available. It is a joyful noise—in unity with heaven and all who join in psalms with voice and instrument. Let everything that is capable of making sound and everyone who has breath praise the Lord in the past, in the present, in the future and on earth as well as the heavens.<sup>64</sup>

The uniting of the two natures in the one person of Christ unfolds a rich simultaneity in the Lutheran aesthetic in music. Praetorius and Schütz as gifted musicians, and the gifted astronomer, Kepler, with his music of the spheres, recognized this richness and added to it. The old and the new in music, the one and the many of the Church, the text and the music of the divine Word, the faith and the artistry of the musician are held together by the unity of the divine and human in Christ.

The musical simultaneity in Christ, begun with Luther and his colleagues, extending through Praetorius and Schütz (together with Kepler’s insights) would not last. Because the singing and saying became separated from each other, the *concio* and the *cantio* pitted against each other, the saying without the singing would lead to Rationalism. The singing without saying would fuel the Pietists. Yet among both the Rationalists and the Pietists there was a felicitous inconsistency. The singing and the saying were not always separated. The Christologically centered Lutheran aesthetic among some—most notably Johann Sebastian Bach—ensured that the era following

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<sup>64</sup> James L. Brauer, “The 1676 Engraving for Heinrich Schütz’s Becker Psalter: A Theological Perspective on Liturgical Song, Not a Picture of Courtly Performers.” *Concordia Journal* 28, no. 3



Praetorius, Kepler and Schütz was not entirely *terra incognita* as some have concluded.<sup>65</sup>

The period in the next chapter, for all its disintegration, witnesses new insights and further developments building upon Luther's initial perceptions. There will be new "Asaphs" who will sing new songs. This too is the glory of God hidden in music's weakness and suffering!

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(July 2002): 252.

<sup>65</sup> See Moser, *Heinrich Schütz*, p. 703, and Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, p. 219.



### **Chapter 3   *Fantasia: “What Language Shall We Borrow?”*** **Reformation in a New Era**

*Like all music, the figured bass should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the recreation of the soul. — J. S. Bach*

The form of this chapter is different from the two preceding chapters and the two which will follow. The preceding chapters developed a Lutheran aesthetic in music by focusing on the work of significant Lutheran musicians and noting how Christology informed and formed their music. The last two chapters will be organized in a similar way. But events set in motion by the Lutheran Reformation broke out in the storm of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) which greatly altered the theological landscape of Lutheranism in Germany and in the related Lutheran kingdoms of Scandinavia. In a storm the victims look for security wherever they may find it, and afterwards take up the task of rebuilding; rebuilding differently or similarly but not exactly the same as the way things were before the storm.

The theological controversies between Lutherans and Roman Catholic theologians, as well as those between the Lutherans and the Reformed, breaking out into the Thirty Years War caused an inward turning among Lutherans in matters of faith which, consequently, affected the Lutheran aesthetic in music. This chapter will examine two expressions of that inward turn as it relates to the Lutheran aesthetic in music. The first expression is a focus on human feelings. The second is the development of the experiential aspect of the mystical union between Christ and the believer.



Christologically, this inward turn marked a loss in the richness of the Lutheran confession of a Christ *pro nobis* (“for us”) and *in nobis* (“in us”) while also confessing Christ *extra nos* (“outside us”) for the diminished confession of a Christ exclusively *in nobis*. As a result, the Lutheran musicians, composers and hymn writers associated with this diminished Christology are not significant in the history of western music. Nevertheless, because of this narrow focus on human feelings and the mystical union, some among the lesser-known Lutheran musicians provided developments in the Lutheran musical aesthetic which would impact the succeeding generations. Among these were the Danish hymn writer, Hans Adolph Brorson, and the German, Philipp Nicolai.

Standing as a landmark, however, to what had been before the storm and as a guide to what would be restored in the course of time is the towering musical figure of Johann Sebastian Bach. While he too will explore the dimensions of human feeling and the mystical union, his Lutheran Christology is of the fullness expressed by Martin Luther. Out of that fullness Bach will compose music embodying the full Lutheran Christology.

While extreme forms of Pietism and Rationalism will carry the Lutheran aesthetic in music to its disintegration, and while the moral synthesis of experience and reason in the work of Kant will influence many Lutheran musicians for good and for ill, it will be the deeper current of the brook (Bach) which will ensure the continuance of what began in the Reformation. The strength of this deep, strong brook will remain hidden for a time by the aftermath of the storm. This hiddenness, as noted earlier, is part of the Lutheran aesthetic.



The interplay between music and human feeling had long been recognized as a powerful force before Pietism moved to harness that force for its movement.

Nothing is more characteristic of human nature than to be soothed by pleasant modes or disturbed by their opposites. This is not peculiar to people in particular endeavors or of particular ages. Indeed, music extends to every endeavor; moreover, youths, as well as the aged are so naturally attuned to musical modes by a kind of voluntary affection that no age at all is excluded from the charm of sweet song. What Plato rightfully said can likewise be understood: the soul of the universe was joined together according to musical concord.<sup>1</sup>

Boethius' appreciation for music in the 6<sup>th</sup> century finds ready appreciation in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Unlike the use of Boethius' writings and the ancient Greek musical theory employed by early Lutheran musicians (notably by Praetorius and Kepler), who found the Greek understanding of universal form to be useful for expressing in music the order of a creation reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, it is Boethius' moral concerns about music which appeal to Lutheran musicians of this era. The philosopher, echoing in his time the complaint about music's debasement in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. by popular innovations and theatrical expressions, finds ready agreement by the musicians of Pietism. Boethius, foreshadowing similar Pietist complaints, laments,

Music was indeed chaste and modest when it was performed on simpler instruments. But since it has been squandered in various, promiscuous ways, it has lost its measure of dignity and virtue; and, having almost fallen into a state of disgrace, it preserves nothing of its ancient splendor.... Plato holds music of the highest moral character, modestly composed, to be a great guardian of the republic;

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<sup>1</sup> Ancius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, trans. Calvin M. Bower (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 2. Bower notes that Boethius' use of the term "mode" (*modus*) does not carry the meaning of octave-species that it carries today, but a more general meaning of temperament or tuning. *Ibid.*, n3.



thus it should be temperate, simple and masculine, rather than effeminate, violent or fickle.<sup>2</sup>

While the Pietists developed no formal theology of music, their criticisms of the church music in Germany and the Scandinavian countries, heavily influenced by the Italian baroque, provide insights into music's role among them. The complaint which the Pietists expressed loud and long against art music in the church was focused on three points. Their first complaint was that art music, because of its complexity and sophistication, goes over the heads of the congregation. If the congregation is to be edified in its listening, the music must lie within the comprehension of the listeners.

Although there is no doubt that many an evil man without the slightest intention of bettering himself sings along only out of custom, whether openly or quietly to himself, when a powerful and spiritual hymn is sung, such an action prods his conscience, and if it does not lead to his conversion, nevertheless it certainly serves as a testimony to the Judgment Day.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly related to this first complaint against art music's incomprehensibility and its concomitant unedifying nature is the second complaint: art music in the church does not present a text that is understandable to the listening congregation. This was certainly true when the text was in Latin. Not only did Latin carry strong connotation of the Roman Catholic Church—a connotation much to be avoided by Pietism—but also having become a foreign tongue to the congregation, the language served only to obfuscate the text rather than render it plain and clear. Their complaint against art music is the same as their complaint against “artistic” sermons.

There are preachers who fill most of their sermons with things that give the impression that the preachers are learned men, although the

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<sup>2</sup> Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, pp. 3-4. According to Boethius, music that is soft, tender and effeminate is termed *mollis* while music that is firm, austere and masculine is termed *durus*. The history of music in Pietism could be summarized as *durus* becoming *mollis*.

<sup>3</sup> Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen “Preface” *Geistreiches Gesangbuch* (Halle 1705), in *Pietists: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p. 168



hearers understand nothing of this. Often many foreign languages are quoted, although probably not one person in the church understands a word of them.... The pulpit is not the place for an ostentatious display of one's skill. It is rather the place to preach the Word of the Lord plainly but powerfully. Preaching should be the divine means to save the people, and so it is proper that everything be directed to this end. Ordinary people, who make up the largest part of a congregation, are always to be kept in view more than the few learned people, insofar as such are present at all.<sup>4</sup>

For the Pietists the plainly spoken Word was certainly far more desirable than the incomprehensible and carnal sung Word of art music. Yet while placing more emphasis on a cognitive comprehension of the Word than on an affective comprehension, they did not reject the use of music. Pietism found in some hymns the perfect unity of word and music that would be equally understandable to every worshiper, and, if understood, would lead to the worshipers' edification. This is an expression of the sufficiency and perspicuity of the Word in its narrowest sense, narrower than anything previously known among Lutherans.

All Christians were to "Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things" (Psalm 98:1). This *Urtext* from the Psalms for Martin Luther's view of music in the church was also considered the source of inspiration for music within Pietism. Like Luther, the Pietists emphasized the *new*.<sup>5</sup> It was in the comprehensible, edifying singing that the experience of faith and Christian community was made more definite for the believer. Johann Arndt held that "the praise of God is man's greatest glory and jewel, that man becomes God's

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<sup>4</sup> Spener, "Pia Desideria", *Pietists*, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Wolfgang Schöllkopf, in a study of hymn texts in Württemberg Pietism, notes, "The hymns of early Pietism were...new. They were set in energetic, baroque methods of composition." See Martin Brecht, ed., *Gott ist mein Lobgesang: Philipp Friedrich Hiller (1699-1769)* (Metzingen: Ernst Franz Verlag, 1999), p. 64.



instrument, God's lyre and harp for the playing out of the most lovely sound and tone."<sup>6</sup>

Music became useful in Pietism for stirring up faith as well as for inspiring the living of the Christian life.

The praise of God, consequently [in view of humanity being the musical instrument of God], is heard in the dignity of His creation which becomes a sounding board for the *new song*. Singing and saying [*singen und sagen*] becomes the foundational basis of the whole Christian life, out of the echo comes the discipleship [*aus Nachklang wird Nachfolge*].<sup>7</sup>

This understanding of the role of music leads to the third of the three complaints which Pietism launched against art music in the church: its worldliness. The new style of music coming into Germany from Italy, according to Pietist thought, glittered in its voluptuousness, tempting the listener to sensual pleasure. Its high demands of musical technique made art music elitist, exclusionary and susceptible to pride. Such music carried more that was harmful than anything good it might bring into the congregation of the faithful.

Given these three complaints, what characteristics did the music of Pietism embrace to set it off from art music?

The simple hymn style became the model, and through the stately, somber and dignified execution of the music the hearer was able to absorb what was useful in the text. That such an approach often lapsed into irreverent sentimentalism was an indication of the dangers to which such extreme personal subjectivism could lead.

Musically, many of the hymns of this period were characterized by melodies of a lighter nature, the occasional use of triple or waltz-like meters, uneven rhythms of the Reformation chorales were changed to melodies which were isorhythmic in character, the tunes proceeding largely in equal-note values often

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<sup>6</sup> Brecht, *Gott ist mein Lobgesang*, p. 63.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.



underlayed with a richer harmonic foundation than had been previously known.<sup>8</sup>

Still, as a Lutheran aesthetic in music would imply, hidden in this weakness of a vastly diminished art of music a new form was created. In this often musically artless era the Prophetic Office of Christ found a new mode of proclamation. The creation of spiritual arias became the primary method for Pietism to express in musical form the experience of faith and Christian fellowship. The aria, ironically a style imported into Germany from Italy, was a departure from the *cantus firmus* setting of the Lutheran tradition. Previously in the Lutheran tradition the composer did not invent the *cantus firmus*. Since word and music together were a textual-musical unity, the text associated with its chorale melody provided the already existing *cantus firmus* for the composer, who worked it into a motet, *Konzert*, or cantionale setting. The aria, on the other hand, was a simple song set over a generalbass. As such the composer was not bound to a preset *cantus firmus* but was allowed much more freedom in compositional techniques.<sup>9</sup>

This simple, aria-like style of the Pietist hymn/song grew out of the small group movement within Pietism. One of Philipp Jakob Spener's "pious desires" was for greater familiarity of the Scriptures and greater discipline in living the Christian life among faithful Christians. To accomplish this he intended "to reintroduce the ancient and apostolic kind of church meeting."<sup>10</sup>

What is lacking in both of these instances (in public preaching and private reading) would be supplied by the proposed exercises. It would not be a great burden either to the preachers or to the people, and much would be done to fulfill the admonition of Paul in

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<sup>8</sup> Carl F. Schalk, "German Hymnody," *Hymnal Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 29-30.

<sup>9</sup> See Martin Geck, *Die Vokalmusik Dietrich Buxtehudes und der frühe Pietismus* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1965), pp. 119-131.

<sup>10</sup> Philipp Jakob Spener, "Pia Desideria," *Pietists*, p. 32.



Colossians 3:16, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.' In fact, such songs may be used in the proposed meetings for the praise of God and the inspiration of the participants.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 2 A popular Teerstegen hymn, set to a melody by the Reformed Pietist, Neander

Simple songs, easily sung by all, with Scriptural, edifying texts were the result of the popular establishment of these small group gatherings or conventicles. Growing out of these small group gatherings the hymns and spiritual songs (arias) soon took on the character of creating a feeling of edifying closeness. For the Pietists, however, whether the context inspired the feelingful experiences in the singers, or whether the feelings expressed by the hymns being sung inspired the context, the outcome was good.

There appears to be a contradiction in the pious desires of these Lutherans. On the one hand, the criticism of Italian-influenced art music and the use of Latin

<sup>11</sup> Spener, "Pia Desideria," *Pietists*, pp. 33-34. Spener himself once reminisced about his youth on Sundays when, after dinner, he "undertook nothing other than something light, as some *ascetica* and encouragement toward godliness and devotion, where I could have some good joy come to me in singing some of the new hymns of Rist, Homberg and such." Quoted in Geck, *Die Vokalmusik Dietrich Buxtehudes*, p. 113. In a footnote, Geck comments, "The difference over against after-dinner singing [*Über-Tisch-Singen*] which Luther advocated is evident: Luther would make beautiful music—whether spiritual or secular; Spener wanted to be edified." *Ibid.*, n129.



texts would seem to indicate that the Pietists emphasized only a cognitive dimension of knowing. On the other hand, their intense focus on the feelingful experiences of the believer would indicate an emphasis on an affective dimension of knowing. While extremes were known among the radical Pietists, Pietism within the mainstream of the Lutheran Church embraced both the cognitive and affective domains of knowing.<sup>12</sup> What could be apprehended cognitively through the proclamation of the Word, could also be apprehended affectively through the hymns and songs of Pietism.

The Danish hymn writer, Hans Adolph Brorson (1694-1764) is a significant example of one who set the intense, feelingful experience of the believer's union with Christ in the Lord's Supper with particularly expressive texts. While Brorson became a priest in the Danish Church and, in 1741, Bishop of Ribe, his academic training also included philosophy and philology. Consequently the language of his hymn texts expresses a finely honed use and understanding of words. In the context of feeling, Brorson writes frequently about the "sweetness" of union with Jesus,<sup>13</sup> emphasizing this point by references to the sweetness of the wine in the Lord's Supper and the bread made of "sweet dough" (*søde dej*).

Sweetness is tied together here with purity and truth, in opposition to sourness, which appears when dough sours, or when food and drink are tainted and become inedible (*cf.* sweet milk). Set in relation with the Lord's Supper this [analogy of sweetness] makes it clear that Jesus' grace, in conjunction with the enjoyment of the taste of the

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<sup>12</sup> Pietism as a movement within the Lutheran Church brought its insights to bear along with the orthodox Lutheran theologians, resulting in an expanded musical tradition inherited from the past. As Pietism separated from the Lutheran Church, or became "a church within the church" the distortions became more apparent, since Pietism's *Christus in nobis* became separated from the external Word of preaching, Sacraments and the worshipping congregation, the form of *Christus pro nobis*.

<sup>13</sup> My translation of the Danish word *søde* as "sweet" is not to be construed as a sentimental, fleeting sensation of sweetness. Brorson's meaning is similar to Luther's meaning in translating Psalm 34:8(9) as "O taste and see that the Lord is sweet [*freundlich* as in *suavis*]." Luther developed an appreciation for this rugged "sweetness" from the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux, who could write of the "sweetness of the cross" (*suavis in cruce*) in his sermon on the Song of Songs (61:1-6).



bread in the Lord's Supper, breaks in upon the human mind spoiled by sin, and purifies it. The forgiveness of sin becomes an experiential feeling of liberation and enlightenment which can be directly perceived in the mind. The word 'sweet' is used by Brorson with extraordinarily great frequency.<sup>14</sup>

Brorson's hymn for the Lord's Supper, *Aldrig kand jeg sige*, ("Never could I sink") portrays the experience of heavenly joy, not in the mystical sense of a fusion of the soul and Jesus, but as an intense experience of liberation when the soul is opened to heaven's eternity by the sacramentally formed union with Jesus. In this particular hymn the soul experiences "paradise" [*himmerige*] and "heavenly joy" [*himmel-glæde*]. This is true because the bread and wine, being the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, are full of heavenly joy. Jesus is called a "heavenly grape" [*himmeldrue*] from which one may suck eternal joys in the Sacrament.

The joy is a feeling of being freed from all which weighs down the soul and holds it bound in its peculiarly limiting sin and in the narrow reality of earth. With the renewal [*fornyelsen*] of union with Jesus in the Lord's Supper, humanity feels in all points encompassed by God's eternal love and abundant life.

Against this background it is clear that the concept *unio mystica* in Brorson's consideration does not escape human experience. Union with Jesus really can be experienced in that it opens an eternity, a heaven, in the soul. At the same time... Jesus and the believer remain two separate individuals, and the human identity of the believer is not annulled in a complete fusion with the Divine.<sup>15</sup>

Brorson's poetic expression of the *communicatio idiomatum* remains thoroughly Lutheran even as it is colored by Pietism. The human feelingful experience is the result of the Sacrament in which the communication truly occurs.

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<sup>14</sup> Steffen Arndal, *H.A. Brorsons Liv og Salmedigtning* (Århus: Religionspædagogisk Center, 1994), p. 57. See also Arndal's earlier study of Brorson's poetry: Steffen Arndal, "*Den store hvide flok vi see...*": *H. A. Brorson og tysk vækkelsessang* (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1984).

<sup>15</sup> Arndal, *Brorson*, p. 61. Other implications for the *unio mystica* in Brorson's hymns will come in the next section where his poetic thoughts about creation are imbued with profound meaning, viz. the *unio mystica*.



While Brorson's hymns numbered in the hundreds, they were set to a wide variety of melodies crafted in the simple, aria-like style mentioned above and also to folksong melodies. This independent separation of text and tune weakened the effect of the *cantus firmus* tradition among Lutheran Pietists, since a given melody no longer brought a specific text to the mind of the hearer. The melodies became secondary to the texts, merely the vehicles to carry the texts tunefully to the listener's ear.

In doing this, however, the Pietists did not see themselves as turning away from the musical-theological tradition established by Luther and others in the Reformation. Exercising the freedom so highly espoused by Luther himself the Pietists considered themselves to be carrying the Lutheran musical tradition further in its pragmatic effects, as Johann Walter had pursued the pedagogical nature of music.

Luther in holy zeal had insisted that the congregation would sing the beautiful music [of the liturgy] which the choir would lead. Pietism went out to the individual: Whatever the whole congregation sings, so must the individual be able to sing; whatever edifies the whole congregation, so the individual must also experience the edifying effects of the hymn.<sup>16</sup>

This intense focus on the individual Christian's feeling of edification, ideally located in the context of the small gathering of believers, colored the hymns and songs of Pietism as *Hausmusik*.

Consequently, while early Pietism, with Luther, emphasized the Divine Service with its preaching of the Gospel and administration of the Holy Sacraments as integral to the believer's life, the practical outcome of the individualizing

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<sup>16</sup> Geck, *Die Vokalmusik Dietrich Buxtehudes*, p. 112. "On Hindrances to Theological Studies, 1680," *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 69.



tendency in Pietism led, over time, to the undoing of the tradition of music established in the Lutheran Reformation.

The public divine service [*Gottesdienst*] is for Pietism no longer essential. Church going is no longer valued.... Pietism divided the congregation between converted, for whom there was no need for the divine service, and the unconverted who should still come to the divine service.... Therewith, not only the art music but also the congregational singing lost their function as indispensable pieces of the divine service. The congregation as the assembly of the baptized falls away. With this the *cantus firmus* of the German congregational hymn, the clasp binding together the choir and the people as *congregation*, also falls away. Congregational song and churchly art music fall aside.<sup>17</sup>

This falling away in the value of the Divine Service, with its preaching and Sacraments, among the radical Pietists is very clearly seen in a letter by Gerhard Teerstegen, another writer of hymn texts:

May your heart be your dearest place of retirement where Jesus waits on you and will hold communion with you. Be truly at one with Him. He is enough for you. Even in public life strengthen yourself often with upright or peaceful looks toward Him, even if you have no sensible experience [of Him] at all.<sup>18</sup>

Teerstegen tried to maintain a feelingful experience in isolation apart from the means of the Word and Sacraments. This was the same “enthusiasm” which Luther rejected among the radical Reformers who looked for the effects of the Holy Spirit apart from the external Word.

Besides the decline in the value of the Divine Service among the Pietists, the very worldly music which early Pietism criticized in the art music of the church becomes part of the music of Pietism. This worldliness was not that of the art music inspired by the Italian style, but rather the worldliness of popular, secular songs.

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<sup>17</sup> Christhard Mahrenholz. “Johann Sebastian Bach und der Gottesdienst seiner Zeit (1950),” *Musicologica et Liturgica: Gesammelte Aufsätze von Christhard Mahrenholz* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1960), p. 214.

<sup>18</sup> Gerhard Teerstegen. “Spiritual Letters,” *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 246.



The familiarity of popular song, which makes the melodies easily comprehended by all, became an irresistible source of inspiration for the many melodies of Pietist song.<sup>19</sup>

[Freylinghausen's *Geistreiches Gesangbuch*] spurred the Wittenberg theological faculty to issue a judgment roundly criticizing the 'pompous, superficial, and almost licentious manner of the secular songs' that had now generally and specifically with Freylinghausen's hymnbook appeared in churches. It also condemned the 'many hopping, jumping, dactylic' songs in this collection.<sup>20</sup>

As Pietism continued with its massive outpouring of hymns and music for the home and conventicle, "the musical gain was in inverse proportion to the quantity."<sup>21</sup> The quality of the texts, with music to match, degenerated to the sentimentality of "the sweet name of Jesus, beautiful little flowers, delicate spiritual songs and lovely music."<sup>22</sup>

### *Emotion and Feeling—The Effect of Music in Rationalism*

The emphasis on the feelingful experience for the believer in the music of Pietism was embraced in a thorough way by musicians and theorists of the Enlightenment era. A leading proponent of Enlightenment music theory, whose roots were deeply formed in Pietism, was Johann Georg Sulzer (1720-1779). Though formed in the Calvinist Pietism of Winterthur, Switzerland, Sulzer's theories about the fine arts were embraced by many Lutheran theorists and

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<sup>19</sup> Appealing to the directness of the Reformation chorale, the poetry of the hymn texts of Pietism, together with the simple song-like melodies "gave the hymns a spontaneous and innocent character, going directly into the experience of singing without rhetorical circumlocution and artistic self-criticism." H.A. Brorson: *Udvalgte salmer og digte*, ed. Steffan Arndal (Borgen: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 1994). p. 292.

<sup>20</sup> Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, pp. 260-261. There is a remarkable similarity between the arguments in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries over German church music and those in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in American Lutheranism.

<sup>21</sup> Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, pp. 260-261.

<sup>22</sup> Geck, *Die Vokalmusik Dietrich Buxtehudes*, p. 115.



composers. In Sulzer's mind music is capable of cultivating individual morality within the hearer's emotional experience with that music. At the same time, betraying his Calvinist upbringing, music was also an art that needed to be kept in check so that the potentially dangerous passions aroused by music would not lead the individual hearer to excess.

In his *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* (1792), Sulzer developed his theory of *Empfindung* (sentiment).

Just as philosophy and science have knowledge as their ultimate goal, so the fine arts have the goal of sentiment. Their immediate aim is to arouse sentiments in a psychological sense. Their final goal, however, is a moral sentiment by which man can achieve his ethical value. If the fine arts are ever to become the sister of philosophy, and not just a gaggle of loose wenches one calls upon for diversion, they must be guided by reason and wisdom in their stimulation of sentiment. This is a law that also applies to the sciences. 'Nisi utile est, quod facimus, stulta est sapientia,' one poet has written, as modest as he is wise.<sup>23</sup>

The Latin quotation is from one of *The Fables of Phaedrus* (ca. 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.). In that fable Jove concludes, "Unless what we do is useful, it is foolish to boast of our glory." Sulzer alters the quote to read *sapientia* (wisdom) rather than *gloria* (glory).<sup>24</sup> For Sulzer the usefulness of music is its sentiment that leads the hearer to a moral goal.

In sharp contrast, as though describing the affect-laden music of Johann Sebastian Bach, Plato's Phaedrus (4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), agrees with Socrates that while rhetoric aims to move the hearer, it moves the hearer more accurately if it is coupled with the knowledge of the truth proclaimed. Phaedrus concludes, "You [Socrates]

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<sup>23</sup> *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment: Selected Writings of Johann Georg Sulzer and Heinrich Christoph Koch*, ed. Nancy Baker and Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 28-29.

<sup>24</sup> See *Phaedrus Fabeln: Latin-Deutsch*, ed. Eberhard Oberg (Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler Verlag, 1999), pp. 100-102. Cf. *The Fables of Phaedrus*, trans. P. F. Widdows (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), p. 75.



mean the living and breathing word [λέγεις ζῶντα καὶ ἐμψυχον, literally an “ensouled” word] of him who knows, of which the written word may justly be called the image.”<sup>25</sup> For Bach, unlike Sulzer, church music is more than *Empfindung*. It is truthful proclamation, *i.e.*, the voice of the living Word, the Christ. At the root of this difference is a difference in Christology. Bach’s Christology includes the *communicatio idiomatum* whereas Sulzer’s Christology is paradigmatic to inspire moral thought and feeling.

Like the Pietists of his upbringing, Sulzer distinguishes between knowledge and sentiment; the former deals with that which is outside the person while the latter deals with the impressions within the person. At its heart, then, Sulzer’s *Empfindung* theory places itself in contrast to the Lutheran tradition of an emphasis on the external Word (*externum Verbum*) and on the *pro nobis* nature of Christ’s work. Indeed Pietism had already witnessed the shift from Christ’s work *pro nobis* to an emphasis on His work *in nobis*, together with a gradual replacing of the external Word in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments by the feelingful experiences of the believer.

The church music of the Lutheran Reformation understood itself essentially as *laus dei*.... Man is God’s instrument. He praises God...out of joy, revealed to him through the Word.... It holds otherwise in the music of Buxtehude [and of Pietism in general]. Here the man is engaged with himself. It is no more the actual Word considered in the proclamation of that Word. There is now a greater concern with the mood, what the Word leaves behind in the soul: the gentle bliss of mystical *Jesuliebe* and the passion of ecstatic expectation for the life to come.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. 36 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), p.567.

<sup>26</sup> Geck, *Vokalmusik Dietrich Buxtehudes und der Frühe Pietismus*, pp. 181-182. Although Buxtehude’s vocal music was profoundly influenced by Pietism, his calling within the musical life of the Lutheran Church served to prevent Pietism’s disdain of artistic music from impacting his own highly creative musical art.



The Thuringian *Capellmeister*, Heinrich Christoph Koch (1749-1816), took Sulzer's theories about the fine arts and applied them specifically to music. Whereas the Pietists sought to awaken pious feelings with music, the focus among rationalistic musicians was the analysis of how music's art awakened feelings. In a three volume work entitled *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition* (1782), Koch defined the effect of music upon sentiments:

Music is a fine art which has the intention of awakening noble feelings in us. Feelings lie dormant in man's nature and are properly aroused only by certain natural causes. For example, the possession of something which we suppose to be good engenders pleasure, and the idea that we might meet with misfortune awakens fear in us. Feelings bring about resolutions: pleasure prompts us to seek certain possessions of the good which produced it, and fear causes us to take measures to prevent the dreaded misfortune from befalling us. The fine arts in general, and thus also music, possess a unique property which enables them through artistic means [*künstliche Veranlassungen*] to waken feelings in us.... Therefore, the proper aim of music is to awaken feelings.<sup>27</sup>

The themes of experience, edification and pragmatism first expounded by the Pietists can be seen very clearly in Koch's assessment of Enlightenment music, now become a "fine art" because feeling is coupled with reason making it *empfindlich*.

As a way of illustrating how the *Empfindung* theories in the Enlightenment were related to the Lutheran musical tradition, and yet at the same time were very different from that tradition, a comparison can be made between two significant compositions. The first composition is the passion cantata (or more precisely, oratorio) by Carl Heinrich Graun, *Capellmeister* to Frederick the Great in Berlin: *Der Tod Jesu*, which was frequently cited by the theorists of the Enlightenment as a work which embodied their *Empfindung* ideal. Daniel Gottlob Türk, a Lutheran organist of the time wrote,

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<sup>27</sup> *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment*, p. 144.



Who could listen to the first chorale in Graun's *Tod Jesus, Du dessen Augen flossen*, and not be moved? And what produces the emotional response here, since the same melody [*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*] often has little effect on us? Without doubt it is largely the plain treatment (aside from the well-chosen harmony).<sup>28</sup>

Notice that for Türk the affect is created not by the union of text and tune, but by the fine art of Graun's setting. It is an expression of the musician's prophetic office, but it is a constrained expression because it seems to overlook the communication of attributes within the chorale as earlier Lutheran musicians appreciated.

The second example is by the great *Capellmeister* of Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach: his *St. Matthew Passion*, which has been universally acclaimed as the embodiment of the Lutheran musical/theological tradition from Luther. By the form and musical forces employed by Bach, the Leipzig *Capellmeister* grasped both the prophetic and priestly element of his Office.

The chorale reverberating from the chancel side of the church warned the audience and alerted skeptics at the outset that what awaited them was not 'theatrical music,' but music that indisputably proclaimed its sacred and liturgical character.<sup>29</sup>

Only twenty-six years separate the two works—Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* was first performed on Good Friday, 1729, in Leipzig; Graun's *Tod Jesu* on Wednesday in Holy Week, 1755, at the *Domkirche* in Berlin. Though proximate in age, the two works are worlds apart in terms of the texts upon which they are based, and the music to which the texts are set. While Graun's setting of Karl Ramler's passion poem was immensely popular long after his death in 1759, its popularity began to recede following Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in

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<sup>28</sup> Quoted in *Daniel Gottlob Türk On the Role of the Organist in Worship* (1787), trans. Margot Ann Greenlimb Woolard (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2000), p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> Christoph Wolff. *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2000), p. 303.



1828. By 1847 a critic writing in an issue of the *Allgemeinen Musikalischen Zeitung* could declare bluntly,

In Holy Week there were four such [spiritual] concerts, in pairs Graun's old and antiquated *Tod Jesu* was presented, possibly because it is much easier to produce than Sebastian Bach's *Matthäus Passion*, which stands so high over the Graun cantata, as a genius over a Philistine.<sup>30</sup>

In reading the assessment by Graun's contemporaries, one gets a much different view of his musical creativity. Johann Adam Hiller's eulogy is typical:

As a composer he thoroughly understood harmony and its art. His harmonious settings were above all pure [*rein*] and clear [*deutlich*].<sup>31</sup> ...His essential harmonic works are all, according to their characteristics, very well crafted. His fugues are neither bombastic nor dull, neither forced nor frivolous in their writing; one may, if proof is desired, consider only the choruses in *Der Tod Jesu*. Overall one can commend him, in this manner of writing, as the paragon of all composers.... He was, in this point, very sensitive [*empfindlich*].<sup>32</sup>

Some of the change in attitude toward Graun's work is due to changing tastes on the part of the musical audiences from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present.<sup>33</sup> In the context of this current study, however, apart from history's assessment of the two passion settings, the two works present very different understandings of the purpose of Jesus' death on the cross. These differing understandings are reflected in the respective musical settings, which are composed to elicit different edifying responses from the hearer.

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<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Herbert Lölkes, *Ramlers "Der Tod Jesu" in den Vortonungen von Graun und Telemann* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1999), p. 231, n66.

<sup>31</sup> Johann Mattheson described the art of making a good melody in three dimensions: *Leichtigkeit*, agility or ease, *Deutlichkeit*, cleanness or distinctiveness, and *Lieblichkeit*, charm or sweetness. See Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, pp. 133ff.

<sup>32</sup> Johann Adam Hiller, *Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Musikgelehrten und Tonkünstler neuer Zeit*, 1784 (Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1979), p. 95.

<sup>33</sup> See Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, p. 364. "The popularity of Graun's Passion faded gradually, to the point where today it is considered—wrongly—the prime example of the deterioration of church music after Bach." *Ibid.*



The opening chorus in each work makes the vast difference between the two immediately clear. Employing the massive musical forces of double choruses and orchestras, together with a third, smaller choir of young voices, Bach begins his passion setting with a musical catechism (*Fig. 3*, below). With the first chorus representing “The Daughters of Zion” and the second chorus representing “The Faithful” the musical dialogue unfolds:

<i>Daughter of Zion</i>	<i>Faithful</i>	<i>Daughters of Zion</i>
“Behold”	“Whom?”	“The Bridegroom”
“Behold”	“How?”	“Like a Lamb”
“Behold”	“What?”	“His patience”
“Behold”	“Where”	“Our guilt”
“Behold Him, out of love and graciousness, carrying the wood of the Cross.”		

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Chorus I

Sopr.

se - het den Bräu - ti - gam, seht ihn als wie ein Lamm,

Alto

se - het den Bräu - ti - gam, seht ihn als wie ein Lamm,

Ten.

se - het den Bräu - ti - gam, seht ihn als wie ein Lamm,

Basso

se - het den Bräu - ti - gam, seht ihn als wie ein Lamm,

Chorus II

Sopr.

Wen? Wie?

Alto

Wen? Wie?

Ten.

Wen? Wie?

Basso

Wen? Wie?

Wen? Wie?

Figure 3 The “catechetical” opening to Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*.



Over this musical dialogue, the small choir of boys' voices sings the chorale, *O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig*, as a *cantus firmus*. This chorale, the German *Agnus Dei* from Luther's *Deutsche Messe*, provides the explanatory introduction to the entire work: *Erbarm dich unser, O Jesu!* ("Have mercy on us, O Jesus!") This opening chorus is set in E minor; "very pensive, of profound thought, to make one gloomy and sad, yet so that one still has hope." (Mattheson) The hope amid the grief and intense sadness of Bach's Passion is centered in the Bridegroom, the Lamb.

Graun, on the other hand, employs the text by Karl Ramler (1725-1798), and fixes hope on a Jesus who is a "hero" (Mvt. 13, 22) and a paragon of "virtue" (Mvt. 7, 17), whom the hearer is moved by text and music to emulate (Mvt. 14). The opening chorale sets the tone for Jesus' heroic death. Graun uses the chorale melody *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* ("O Sacred Head Now Wounded") which would lead the hearer to contemplate from memory the text by Paul Gerhardt. The Gerhardt text is exquisitely rich in the imagery of Jesus' death for sinners, employing elements of Luther's *fröhliche Wechsel*, "the Shepherd dies for sheep who love to wander."<sup>34</sup> Yet in the *gallant* sensitivity of Graun's day—*i.e.*, a restrained sensitivity that found Gerhardt's text too overbearing, lacking in light—the intense feelings in contemplating Christ's Passion as Gerhardt expressed them were deemed more appropriately left implicit rather than explicit.

The anguish of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane is another scene that highlights the difference between the two works in sentiment and edifying purpose

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<sup>34</sup> The *fröhliche Wechsel* or *admirabile commercium*, the "joyous exchange" is not original to Luther. He learned it from Athanasius, αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν ("For He became a man in order that we might become divine", *De Incarnatione*) and Augustine, *egit enim in cruce grande commercium* ("indeed He has conducted a grand exchange in the cross", *Sermo 329.1*). See also page 280 of this thesis.



for contemplating Christ's agony. Bach prepares his hearers for the Garden agony by employing the Passion Chorale ("O Sacred Head") in descending keys leading up to this point. The edifying moment (though for Bach "recreating" moment would be more accurate than "edifying") comes in the bass aria (Mvt. 29), *Gerne will ich mich bequemen*, as the hearer takes up "cross and cup" to drink with Christ. It is not Christ as the paradigm for how a human being deals with suffering, but rather it is a sharing together with Christ in the suffering; His is ours, ours is His. Bach makes the point very personal by weaving his name, in reverse, within the music at measures 65-66 (B-natural or "H", "C", "A", B-flat or "B") with the text *trink ich doch dem Heiland nach* ("I drink as my Savior did"), while the continuo line quotes the opening melodic phrase of the Passion Chorale (Fig. 4).



Figure 4 The *H C A B* of Bach's personal identification with this text is located in the solo instrumental part, second stave, first line, third measure.

When Graun's setting reaches the Garden agony the aria text at this point is pure Enlightenment edification. Set to a melody line of rising (see Fig. 5, next



page), not descending, intervals which serve to instill an uplifting sentiment in the hearer, the soprano soloist sings, “Exhausted, I climb the steep path to the Temple of Virtue...in anticipation of the sublime region beyond me, and I ease my journey with prayer and song.”



Figure 5 An excerpt from the highly acclaimed Graun aria, *Ein Gebet*

This particular aria enjoyed incredible popularity in Graun's day. The musical theorist, Heinrich Koch, used this aria as an example of fine composition in melody and harmony.

The composer who invents the plan of a piece of music which is to awaken this or that feeling must be capable of imagining the content of the voices accompanying his melody. In this way, he may create a more complete entity in which all components help to promote the proposed aim.... The composition inserted above, which I considered as the plan for the aria by Graun, is an example of this degree of skill at conceiving melody harmonically.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment*, p. 181. Koch admires the “beautiful entirety” of Graun's compositional inventiveness.



Graun seeks to awaken in the hearer the feeling of rising up and leaving behind the darkness of sin for the bright heights of virtue. It is a paradigmatic, virtuous Christ of whom Graun sings, rather than Bach's sacramental Christ from whose own cup of woe the believer drinks. There are only two places in the Ramler-Graun *Tod Jesu*, and then only mere suggestions, where the traditional Lutheran passion theology can be heard. In the Recitative (Mvt. 3), "O Behold! He sinks, burdened with the sins of an entire world" there is a brief suggestion of the justification of the sinner before God. Also in the final chorus (Mvt. 25), "who set the seal of death upon his eternal law" portrays the sinner's reconciliation with God. Nevertheless instead of the intense directness of Bach's music and text, Graun allows the hearer to infer these theological insights by his use of chorale melodies.

The particular chorale melodies Graun uses to set the Ramler texts bring their own particular text associations into the entire passion setting. One may see the Lutheran *cantus firmus* in this, though modified by Graun's *Empfindung* propriety. As mentioned earlier, Graun uses the melody of the Passion Chorale, *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*, which implicitly brings Gerhardt's profound hymn text to the hearer's mind. A similar "wordless" influence by other traditional Lutheran chorale texts is implied by Graun's use of their melodies: *Nun ruhen aller Wälder*, *Es ist gewisslich an der Zeit*, *Herzliebster Jesu*, *Wie schön leuchtet die Morgenstern* and *O Traurigkeit*, *O Herzelied*.

Thus despite Ramler's passion poem being a work which springs from the *Neology*, the "New Learning", of Enlightenment theology in Berlin during the reign of Frederick the Great, Graun's musical setting still contains echoes, however soft and *empfindlich*, of orthodox Lutheran theology. Nevertheless, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, the epitome of his church music for the seasons of the church year,



rightfully overshadows Graun's work in any assessment of Lutheran theology in a musical composition.

After the deaths of Bach and Graun, the musical world of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century mourned the passing of both of these men of great creativity. Johann Hiller recorded a lament for Graun's premature death: "So early Graun died! So soon are we bereft of the father of our harmony!"<sup>36</sup> Likewise the absence of Bach's creative spirit was noted in a letter by Anna Amalia of Prussia, the younger sister of Frederick the Great, to her teacher, Johann Kirnberger, the music theorist and one-time student of Johann Sebastian Bach.

We live in a sad and mournful point in time: the degeneration of all beautiful arts [*Schöne Künste*]; for us there is so much to mourn because our age will not allow us to see and to hear them with new power and with strong, upward ascent.<sup>37</sup>

#### *The Mystical Union—The "Communicatio Idiomatum" in a New Key*

The mystical union (*unio mystica*) is one of the definitive doctrines to arise within Lutheranism and receive new emphasis and expression during the Pietist era. Johann Arndt, the father of Pietism, could write of this mystical union,

*God is love and he who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him* (1 John 4:16). For love itself he became man that it might be the bond of our eternal union with God. O holy union, O holy communion, which shares the taste of love and the sweetness of pleasure with pious hearts! O sweet Jesus, penetrate our hearts with the fiery arrows of your love. Break through into the closed and inner chamber of the soul and heart and enlighten it graciously with your light so that we might have in you our dwelling place, our peace,

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<sup>36</sup> Hiller, *Lebensbeschreibungen*, p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Tobias Debuch, *Anna Amalia von Preußen (1723-1787): Prinzessin und Musikerin* (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2001), p. 103. Anna Amalia was both an advocate of the arts, especially music, and also a gifted composer in her own right. She set the first two movements of Ramler's text, *Der Tod Jesu*, to music, which Kirnberger then included in his treatise, *Kunst des reinen Satzes*.



our joy, our all, our hope, our love, our exultation, our life, our refreshment, our light, our rest, our trust, and all our goods.<sup>38</sup>

This [the renewal in Christ] is the end of all theology and the whole of Christianity. This is union with God (1 Cor. 6:15), the marriage with our heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ (Hos. 2:19), the living faith, the new birth, Christ's dwelling in us, Christ's noble life in us, the Holy Spirit's fruit in us, the enlightenment and healing of the kingdom of God in us.<sup>39</sup>

This union of the believer with Christ in faith was already present in Luther's thought, developed by him in his *The Freedom of the Christian* (1520). In that treatise Luther expressed his understanding of the *fröhliche Wechsel*, the joyous exchange between Christ and the Christian. While Luther likened the joyous exchange to the union of husband and wife in marriage, where each shares what had been the property of the other, his emphasis was placed on the "goods" exchanged rather than on the nature of the union.<sup>40</sup>

This joyous exchange found its way early on into Lutheran hymns (see Nikolaus Herman's Christmas hymn, *Lobt Gott, ihr Christen allzugleich*). However, the metaphor of marriage as an expression of divine Love in the mystical union would be taken up in a more expanded way by Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608), a Lutheran pastor and theologian best known for his two chorales *Wachet auf ruft uns die Stimme* and *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*.

There is a tendency to view Nicolai's two chorales apart from his theological writing. In a thorough study of Nicolai's theology entitled *Philipp Nicolais Verständnis der Christentums* the Swedish theologian, Martin Lindström, would conclude:

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<sup>38</sup> Johann Arndt, *True Christianity: Book Five* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p. 260.

<sup>39</sup> Arndt, *True Christianity*, pp. 277-278.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Martin Luther, "The Freedom of the Christian," *Luther's Works, Vol. 31* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), pp. 357, 366, 371.



Nicolai may be allowed a unique place of having worked out a system in which [divine] Love known and accentuated by the [human] heart's comprehension is synthesized out of Lutheran soil. This has secured him a place in the history of Christian thought. It is meanwhile fully understandable if many, henceforth, give reference to thinking of him as the creator of the two immortal hymns.<sup>41</sup>

In Nicolai's thought, however, his chorales are a musical expression of his theology centered in the mystical union and divine Love. The chorales are not a secondary, creative venture. In this Nicolai emulates Luther, whose theology was so creatively set to music in his *lieder*.

Both of Nicolai's "immortal" chorales were appended to a 1599 work entitled *Frewden-Spiegel deß ewigen Lebens* (*Mirror of the Joys of Eternal Life*). In that devotional work written in response to the plague which swept through Westphalia (1300 of Nicolai's parishioners died in 1597, 170 in one week), Nicolai developed his inspirational thought of how

the goods gained of Christ are represented by three graduated classes. The 'root goods' [*Wurzelgüter*, Nicolai's term] are the satisfaction accomplished through Christ, forgiveness and no longer being held accountable for sin, and the victory of Christ over the devil; the 'stem goods' [*Stammgüter*] are the adoption as God's children, the heavenly bridal joy of intercourse with Christ the Bridegroom, and the indwelling of the Trinity; the 'fruit goods' [*Fruchtgüter*] are peace and joy, love toward one's neighbor, worship of God, and the hope and longing for the heavenly Fatherland.<sup>42</sup>

These doctrinal/devotional themes and the vocabulary which Nicolai employs in his *Freuden-Spiegel* can be discerned easily in the texts of his two chorales. References to the Lord's Supper can be seen in *Wie schön leuchtet*.

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<sup>41</sup> Martin Linström, *Philipp Nicolais Verständnis des Christentums* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1939), p. 293.

<sup>42</sup> The summary is by Albrecht Ritschl in *Geschichte des Pietismus*, Bd. II, p. 23. Ritschl suggests that Nicolai, like many of the Pietists, views these issues in chronological terms. "Nicolai in comparison [to Luther] degrades justification to a beginning condition [*Anfangsbedingung*] of the *unio mystica*, to which he appends the practical consequences spontaneously attending to justification." *Ibid.* On the contrary, Nicolai, as an orthodox Lutheran, considers these doctrinal elements to be theologically simultaneous, not chronological.



Stanza 3 includes: “Thou mine, I Thine; Sing Hosanna! Heavenly manna Tasting, eating.” In stanza 4 Nicolai writes, “Jesus, Thy Spirit and Thy Word, Thy body and Thy blood, afford My soul its dearest treasure.” It is this close bond of the mystical union with the Word and the Sacraments, especially the Lord’s Supper, received in faith which Nicolai (as also Arndt and later, Philipp Spener) emphasizes in order to keep the discussion of the mystical union from departing into mysticism, or the charge of “enthusiasm.”

1. *„Wachet auf“, ruft uns die Stim - me / der Wäch -  
Mit - ter - nacht heißt die - se Stun - de: / sie ru -*

*ter sehr hoch auf der Zin - ne, / wach auf, du Stadt Je -  
len uns mit hel - lem Mun - de: / „Wo seid ihr klu - gen*

*ru - sa - lem! / } Wohl - auf, der Bräut - gam kömmt, / steht  
Jung - frau - en? /*

*auf, die Lam - pen nehmt! / Hal - le - lu - ja! / Macht euch be -*

*reit / zu der Hoch - zeit, / ihr müs - set ihm ent - ge - gen - gehn!“*

2. *Zion hört die Wächter singen, / das Herz tut ihr vor Freuden sprin -  
gen, / sie wachet und steht eilend auf. / Ihr Freund kommt vom  
Himmel prächtig, / von Gnaden stark, von Wahrheit mächtig, / ihr  
Licht wird hell, ihr Stern geht auf. / Nun komm, du werthe Kron, /  
Herr Jesu, Gottes Sohn! / Hosanna! / Wir folgen all / zum Freuden -  
sal / und halten mit das Abendmahl.*

3. *Gloria sei dir gesungen / mit Menschen - und mit Engelzungen, /  
mit Harfen und mit Zimbeln schön. / Von zwölf Perlen sind die To -  
re / an deiner Stadt, wir stehn im Chore / der Engel hoch um dei -  
nen Thron. / Kein Aug hat je gespürt, / kein Ohr hat mehr gehört /  
solche Freude. / Des jauchzen wir / und singen dir / das Halleluja  
für und für.*

Philipp Nicolai 1556–1626

Figure 6 Philipp Nicolai's *Wachet auf*

An enthusiast is the person who wishes to uphold, out of his own inner revelation, this or that dogma which is not found in the Holy Scripture.... If here and there the mystics make use of strange words and manners of speech—many of them have no clear and precise way of thinking—one can separate these aside, as far as I am concerned,



and attend to those which are clearer, revealed in the Holy Scripture, and better represented by the experience of the pious.<sup>43</sup>

It is this simultaneously considered set of doctrines—the work of Christ, the mystical union with God through Christ mediated by the Word and the Sacraments (the *fides quae creditur*) and the apprehending faith (the *fides qua creditur*)—which opens the door for Pietism and the orthodox Lutheran theological tradition together to consider “how the hermeneutic of a metaphysically-ontologically established Christological contemplation can become so versatile that it can envelope a theory of creation with aesthetic and artistic aims.”<sup>44</sup>

The real presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper is the fulcrum and pivot also for the comprehending of the psychological-theological description of the real presence in the heart, the mystical *inhabitation*, as well as fulcrum and pivot for the natural scientific-theological description, a *physica theologica*, for comprehending Christ in the present moment in nature. The orthodox Lutheran mystical contemplation does not flee before the world, but rather turns itself towards the world and unites the aesthetic of the heart with the aesthetic of creation.<sup>45</sup>

The elements of Christ’s three-fold Office—Christ as Prophet, Priest and King—which were implied in the music of earlier Lutherans comes to explicit expression in this era.

Few hymn writers abounded in the union of “aesthetic and artistic aims” in an aesthetic of creation—Christologically and Sacramentally oriented—as well as did Hans Adolph Brorson, the 18<sup>th</sup> century Bishop of Ribe in Denmark. Nature and creation are frequent subjects in his hymns. While Brorson’s hymns were popular during his lifetime, they passed from popularity for a time, almost to disappearing,

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<sup>43</sup> Philipp Jakob Spener. “On Hindrances to Theological Studies, 1680,” *Pietists: Selected Writings*, pp. 68-70. See also, *Johann Arndt: True Christianity*, p. 9ff.

<sup>44</sup> Johann Anselm Steiger. “Ästhetik der Realpräsenz.” *Von Luther zu Bach*, ed. Renate Steiger (Sinzig: Studio. 1999), p. 41.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.



before his hymns experienced a renaissance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalistic movements in Denmark and Norway.

Brorson's philological and philosophical training becomes clearly evident in the texts of his creation hymns. Unlike many Pietistic hymns with a similar subject matter, Brorson's creation hymns exhibit a theologically nuanced meaning. Two of his hymns remain very popular to the present day: *Op! al den ting, som Gud har gjort* ("Arise! All things which God has made," Fig. 8, below) and *Den store hvide Flok vi see* ("Behold the host arrayed in white," Fig. 9, next page). The first appeared in 1739 in a collection of hymns entitled *Troens Rare Klenodie* ("Faith's Unique Treasure"). The second hymn was published posthumously by Brorson's son with 69 other hymns in a collection entitled *Svane Sang*. It was issued in 1765, the year after Brorson's death.



Figure 8 Brorson's *Op! al den ting som Gud har gjort*

In the hymn *Op! al den ting som Gud har gjort* Brorson weaves together St. Paul's declaration that the invisible qualities of God can be seen in what He has made<sup>46</sup> with Martin Luther's insight that the eternal glory of God is hidden in the

<sup>46</sup> Romans 1:19-20



things that are least in God's creation, Brorson's creation hymn ponders the invisible and the incomprehensible within the multi-various phenomena of nature.

It is the proper sense of creation understood as *creatio ex nihilo*, creation from nothing, which moved him. The individual phenomena in nature do not exist by their own power. They could just as well not have been if not for their having been created. Each individual phenomena of nature meets on a background of nothingness where, in the fullness of faith's conviction, a transcendent power, a Creator, brought about the universe and upholds it in its innumerable multiplicity. Faith opens therewith to a new manner of seeing and sensing. In this connection, [Brorson] ties himself to a very interesting use of the word 'glimpse' [*kige*].<sup>47</sup>



Figure 9 Brorson's *Den store hvide flok*, set to a Norwegian folk melody, arranged by Edvard Grieg

The eye of faith sees things for what they are and not merely for what they seem to be.<sup>48</sup> As the musicians Praetorius and Schütz considered the music of earth

<sup>47</sup> Arndal, *Brorson*, p. 45. See also *H.A. Brorson: Udvalgte salmer og digte*, pp. 292-293.

<sup>48</sup> See Theses 19 & 20 in Martin Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation", *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 52-53.



together with the music of the heavenly choirs as a single music, so Brorson “glimpses” all the phenomena of nature—including music—together with the presence of the heavenly realm. Furthermore, the one who sings Brorson’s hymn is moved by the singing of the hymn to “see” along with him.

The hymn, *Op! al den ting som Gud has gjort*, begins with a focus on nature, the “all things which God has made” and concludes the hymn with a resounding “heavenly amen” (*Og himlen svare amen!*) from the angelic host. Yet in the course of the hymn’s stanzas it remains for “the least” (*det mynste*) which God has made in which one may catch “glimpses” of the union of earth and heaven in praising the Creator’s greatness (*storhed*).

The second hymn, *Den store hvide Flok vi see* (Fig. 9, previous page), expresses similar thoughts, but instead of “the least” exhibiting the Creator’s praise, Brorson now considers the grandeur of creation. The “host arrayed in white” comes from the apocalyptic scene in Revelation 7:9-17. Brorson portrays the numberless host of the redeemed as a magnificent nature scene along the mountainous fjords of Norway—“like thousand snow-clad mountains bright” (*som tusind’ Bierge fuld af Snee*).

As in most of the poems in *Swan Song*, snow and whiteness [*hvidheden*] are accentuated. This use is not the snow pictured in earthly life or the tribulations of the end time, but is an experience of the cool clarity and cleanness which the blessed are acquainted with in heaven.<sup>49</sup>

This heightened sense of sight experienced in Brorson’s hymns, while tinged with the language of mysticism (as, in fact, many hymns of Pietism rely upon mystical language), cannot be considered as a mere revival of the Medieval tradition of mysticism.

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<sup>49</sup> Arndal, *Brorson*, p. 104.



The question about Brorson's relationship to mysticism is, therefore, in the final analysis, a question of definition. ...mystical methodology and its depiction of a complete fusion with the Divine in the *unio mystica* has not been part of Brorson's thought.... Brorson's hymns must therefore be designated as related to mysticism and dependent on its language usage, but it would distort the connections in the history of piety and the history of literature to call him a mystic.<sup>50</sup>

Brorson remains a Lutheran in his piety. For while the word "glimpse" expresses the kind of seeing that sees across great distances, through difficult obstacles or comprehends the incomprehensible (and while Brorson, like many Pietist poets, employed the language of ecstatic vision), it is not the kind of seeing which comes for the mystic in the momentary, ecstatic flashes. It is a seeing in faith which allows Brorson to "glimpse" what is hidden in nature. It is faith which, by its experiences—especially the afflicting experiences (*tentatio, anfægtelser*<sup>51</sup>)—renders the realm of nature a transparent veil. Faith transcends that which is hidden to sight in order to see—in the least of nature to its most magnificent—the Creator, the angels and all the saints in light. For Brorson the poet and curate of souls, it is also a faith edified by the singing of his hymn texts.

[Word-created faith] does not close in humanity in a solid materialism, but makes possible a transparent veil which, over all, lets that which lies behind the nothingness shine through. Therewith opens a metaphysical dimension of reality, heaven, which for the believer is filled with the multitude of angels, who finally let their 'amen' resound together with humanity's praise of God's creative might.<sup>52</sup>

This "aesthetic of creation" was part of the musical world of thought for Dietrich Buxtehude and for Johann Sebastian Bach, both of whom were Lutheran

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<sup>50</sup> Arndal, *Brorson*, p. 66.

<sup>51</sup> Luther-like. Arndal observes that "Brorson's faith is a weak faith which, precisely in its weakness, grows strong through trials and suffering." *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>52</sup> Arndal, *Brorson*, p. 46. For the Lutheran Bishop, Brorson, this "metaphysical dimension" is not a higher dimension, but one that is present, though hidden except to faith, in that which is seen. It is important to keep in mind that the use of mystical language among the Lutherans, both Orthodox and Pietist, has nuances that differ from Medieval mysticism.



musicians in the orthodox Lutheran tradition although influenced by the warmth of Pietism. Both composers were influenced by Andreas Werckmeister, a Lutheran organist and pastor who served in Halberstadt, and who also published a book of music theory.

Werckmeister clung to the scriptural pronouncement that the universe was created by God ‘according to number, weight and measure,’ holding that the numerical proportions that underlay the primary musical consonances, the so-called ‘harmonic’ number, reflected God’s work and nature. Not only was the unison an image of God Himself and the major triad (the *trias harmonicas*) an image of the Trinity, but even the proportions of constructions in the Old Testament, such as Solomon’s temple and Noah’s ark, and the lengths of time of the various biblical eras were all based on the same numerical ratios as the musical consonances.... Within this scheme the concept of ‘salvation history’ had a place that related to music, in that the harmonic music of the Christian church represented a basic part of God’s revelation of His nature and the work of salvation accomplished through Christ. Through music one could confirm the content of Scripture, in both its ‘hidden’ and its directly revealed aspects. The major and minor triads represented the divine and human, respectively, while the minor third within the major triad represented the humanity of Jesus.<sup>53</sup>

Chafe is a little condescending towards the “mystical” thought world of Werckmeister and his contemporaries. He does not carefully note that in the Lutheran theological tradition the articles concerning God’s plan of salvation can be established *a priori* only from the promises in the “book of Scripture,” but then, as a consequence of the Scriptures, may be known *a posteriori* in the “book of nature,” even in the “music of the heavens.”

Buxtehude, as a close friend to Werckmeister, most certainly would have read Werckmeister’s treatises on music. This conclusion is reinforced by the two congratulatory poems Buxtehude contributed to Werckmeister’s *Harmonologia*

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<sup>53</sup> Eric Chafe, *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 24. For a discussion of an “aesthetic of the real presence” in Scripture and nature in the works of another theologian of Lutheran Orthodoxy, Peter Lossius, and its impact on music, see Steiger, *Von Luther zu Bach*, pp. 36-41



*Musica* (1702). One poem reads in part: “With highest fame and glory, this work praises the master” (*lobt diese Werck den Meister*; note the play on words with Werckmeister’s name). Given such familiarity with the theory of music espoused by Werckmeister, developed from the ancient philosophy of music among the Greeks, it is not too great a leap to surmise that seven suites written by Buxtehude (though now no longer extant) which depicted the nature of the planets may have been inspired by Werckmeister’s book and based on the seven intervals which Johann Kepler outlined in “Book 5” of his *Harmonices mundi*. Buxtehude also had access to Kepler’s book.<sup>54</sup>

This line of thought is certainly present in a letter which Johann Sebastian Bach wrote in 1708 to resign his post in Mühlhausen. In that letter Bach declares his desire to find a different position where he could establish “a well-regulated church music to the glory of God” (*eine regulirte Kirchenmusik zu Gottes Ehren*). While that expression most often has been interpreted to mean that Bach desired to order the church year with cantatas assigned to each Sunday’s Gospel and *Hauptlied*, Jan Maegaard has shown in a convincing study that “the glory of God” in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century would be recognized best by a divine *unitas in multitudine* in all relationships, especially in music.

It is not difficult, therefore, to imagine that a highly gifted musical personality [*i.e.*, Bach] in 1708 should see in the emerging functional harmony a regularity of universal validity analogous to physical laws and, like them, related to the actual environment—music’s ‘harmonie.’ If it was something like this which the young Bach had vaguely in mind it is very much to the point to ask how, with the [musical] language then available to him, he should have expressed his conception otherwise than with the word *regulirt*. Understood in this way *regulirt* and *zu Ehren Gottes* appear as expressions which,

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<sup>54</sup> For a brief discussion of this enticing suggestion, see Kerala J. Snyder, *Dieterich Buxtehude: Organist at Lübeck* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1987), p. 133.



each from its own point of view, describe the same thing: functional harmony.<sup>55</sup>

All of this may seem to have departed from the topic at hand, the mystical union, but in fact is one of the consequences of the mystical union when considered in the light of both Pietism and Lutheran Orthodoxy. Bach's desire in the assessment described above is more profound than simply an order of church music. It is an expression of an "aesthetic of the heart" (the expressive fervor from the Pietists) united with an "aesthetic of creation" (the consequences of the mystical union with the Word made flesh in the Lord's Supper) set within the ordered world of the divine Promise explicated in the doctrines of Scripture (the clarity of definition from Lutheran Orthodoxy).<sup>56</sup>

Bach valued the *affects* (the aesthetic of heart and creation together) in baroque musical composition. In his little book on figured bass *Vorschriften und Grundsätze zum vierstimmigen spielen des General-Bass oder Accompagnement für Scholaren in der Music*,<sup>57</sup> he comments that a well-played realization of the figured bass not only serves *Gottes Ehre* ("God's glory") but also serves the *Recreation des Gemüths* ("the restoration of the heart").

Restoration [*Recreation*] means namely a new creation, a returning to the original definition of creation. And the concept 'heart' [*Gemüths*] was then [in Bach's day] more comprehensive than it is today, where it has been made to concentrate on denoting the emotional side of human mental life. Then it denoted 'the totality of mental powers

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<sup>55</sup> Jan Maegaard, "...eine regulirte kirchen music..." *Festschrift Jens Peter Larsen* (København: Wilhelm Hansen Musik-Forlag, 1972), p. 158.

<sup>56</sup> That this subject would continue to find interest among Lutheran musicians is witnessed by the 20<sup>th</sup> century German composer, Paul Hindemith. In a discussion of the philosophical approach to music, surveying the tradition handed down by Boethius, Hindemith comments, "It may well be that the last word concerning the interdependence of music and the exact sciences has not been spoken." Paul Hindemith, *A Composer's World: Horizons and Limitations* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1969), p. 9.

<sup>57</sup> See *J. S. Bach's Precepts and Principles*, Translation with Facsimile. Introduction and Explanatory Notes by Pamela L. Poulin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). Bach's comment is at pp. 10-11, with a facsimile at p. 66.



and sensory impulses' [*die Gesamtheit der seelischen Kräfte und Sinnesregungen*] and was used interchangeably [*im Wechsel*] with the concept *heart*, which denoted the real personal center of the human being [*Personzentrum des Menschen*].... *Restoration of the heart* at its deepest is a correcting [*Zurechtbringen*] of the whole person.<sup>58</sup>

Bach's music portrays Christ not only as King, but as Priestly King who restores order by the work of reconciliation, bestowed in the Word and Sacrament.

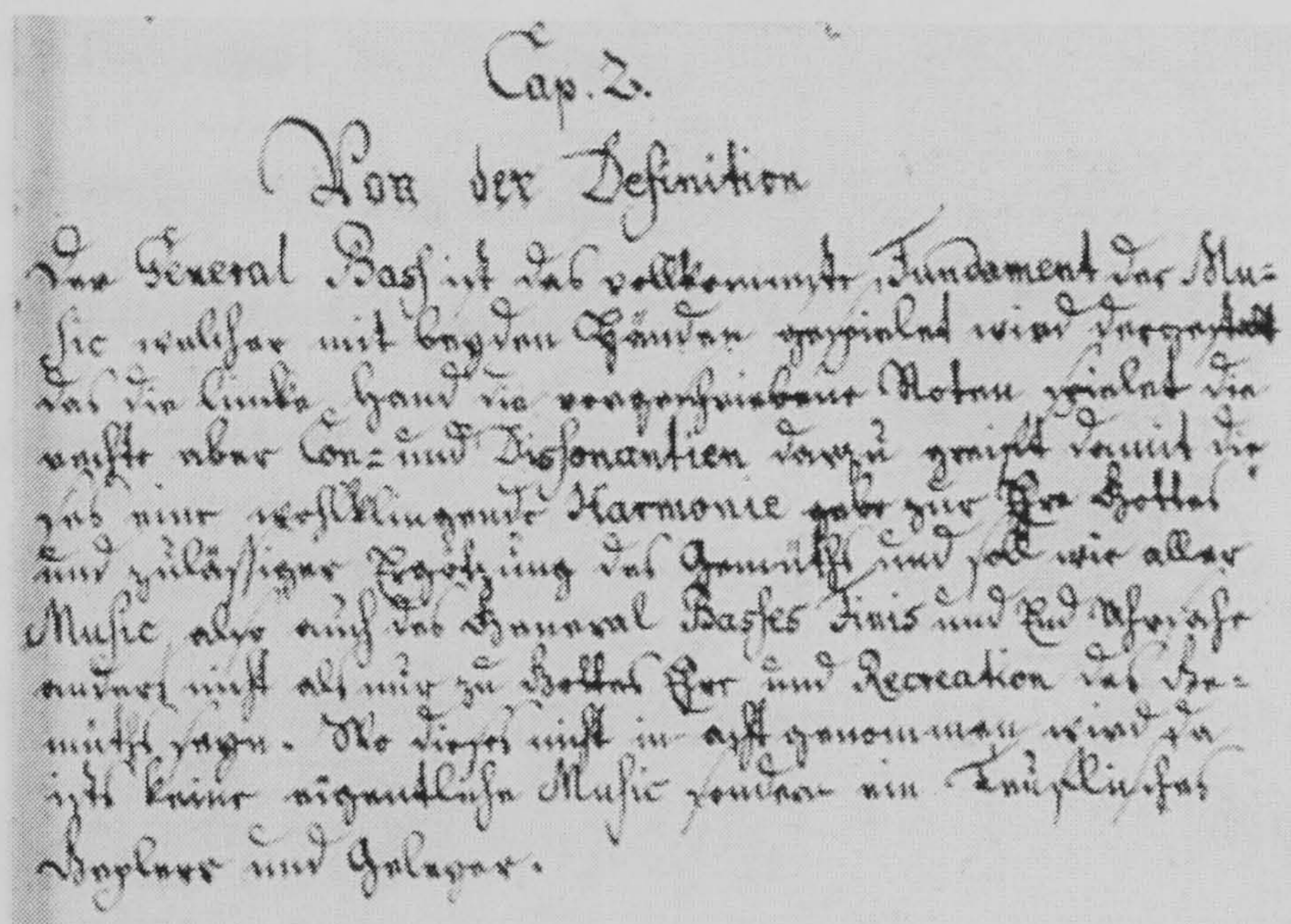


Figure 10 J. S. Bach's comments on music as a *Recreation des Gemüths*.

Bach's Cantata, BWV 140, *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, based on the Nicolai hymn of that name, is a notable example of the "aesthetics" discussed above. The "aesthetic of the heart" is clearly heard in two love duets which frame the central chorale stanza and center of the cantata. The hymn's second stanza tells of Zion's joy because the Lord has come: *Ihr Licht wird hell, ihr Stern geht auf* ("her Star is risen; her Light is come"). The wise virgins follow the now-present Bridegroom into the festive celebration. *Wir folgen all Zum Freudensaal Und halten mit das Abendmahl*.

<sup>58</sup> Oskar Söhngen, "Die Musik im Raum der Schöpfung", *Theologie der Musik* (Kassel: Johannes Stauda Verlag, 1967), pp. 272-273.



Catherine Winkworth's English translation (*Lyra Germanica*, 1858) of that last phrase, "The joyful call, we answer all, And follow to the nuptial hall," loses the significance of the hymn. The joyful, nuptial hall is there (*Freudensaal*) but the *Abendmahl*, the Lord's Supper, has been lost. The imagery of the wedding feast, symbolic of the Sacrament of the Altar, is integral to Nicolai's hymn, and to Bach's cantata. The cantata is conceived not only as Advent anticipation (an aesthetic of the heart), but also as Sacramental joy (the aesthetic of creation).

As for the two love duets which frame the "Christ present now in the Sacrament" stanza of the hymn, the first duet, which precedes the hymn stanza, expresses the longing of the soul to be united with Christ the heavenly Bridegroom. While the second duet, which follows the stanza, expresses the joy (in no less passionate tones than the longing) of now being united, Bride and Bridegroom, soul and Christ. While the texts of these two duets are reminiscent of mysticism's use of the language in the biblical Song of Songs, Bach's setting, like Nicolai's hymn, focuses both the longing and the requiting of love's longings in the Lord's Supper. It is truly a union, though it is sacramental and not mystical.

The music of Bach's cantata likewise focuses the attention of the hearer on the middle stanza, with its *Abendmahl* union with Christ. The opening chorus moves from its *cantus firmus* polyphony, where the faithful appear to be lost and afraid (*Wo? Wo?* "Where are you, you virgins wise?" *Wo?*), to the closing chorale and the solid joy of the eternal feast present now in the Holy Supper.

The closing chorale of the *Wachet auf* cantata is a straightforward four-part harmonization, enveloping the listening, singing congregation in the eucharistic/eschatological bridal joy. This closing chorale, in traditional chorale setting, also serves to rescue the union with Christ from the individualism of Pietism and to



anchor this joy not only in the Lord's Supper, but more so in the sacramental action of the Lord's Supper within the congregational setting of the Divine Service, where the whole fellowship of the faithful is gathered.

...it is not hyperbole to say that Bach could say as much and reach the same depths of meaning with the limited resources of a four-part harmonization as he could with the full-scale resources of choir and orchestra that he typically used for first movements. But I would add that the 'full meaning of the concluding chorale' is not only to those who possess a sufficient 'musical culture' to 'transfer themselves in imagination to the situation which Bach had in mind.' It is even more available to those, regardless of their musical culture, who still know the chorales through their use of them in worship. I doubt that anyone who still sings 'Wachet auf' in worship would find Bach's harmonization at the end of Cantata 140 to be inadequate to its task of representing the eternal 'Gloria' coming from the tongues of angels and the redeemed.<sup>59</sup>

Not merely "*representing* the eternal Gloria" but rather the chorale resounds because the eternal Gloria *inhabits* the music itself. By the Word and Sacrament the singers have tasted joy the union with Christ.

### *Bach's "Credo"—A Full Christological Aesthetic*

The Mass in B minor of Johann Sebastian Bach is such a monumental and consummate work in the creative life of this monumental and consummate composer that the work seems to defy a comprehensive assessment of it. Given the scope of this study, a comprehensive assessment is not possible here. This section, however, will suggest the best starting point for such an assessment.

Is Bach's Mass only a monumental work of art based on a Christian text, or is it a profound grasp of Lutheran theology woven together with music in the simultaneous *singen und sagen* motif of Martin Luther? To be sure, the Mass is not

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<sup>59</sup> Calvin R. Stapert, *My Only Comfort: Death, Deliverance and Discipleship in the Music of Bach* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), p. 217.



a volume of dogmatic theology; hence it is no surprise that some scholars resist calling Bach a theologian.<sup>60</sup> Yet the work is such an artistic fusion of theology and music that it comes as no surprise that Bach has been called “the fifth evangelist.”<sup>61</sup>

Johann Sebastian Bach has suffered much at the hands of history’s assessments. In the Enlightenment Bach was portrayed as an artistic giant, a hero of the German nation. In the Romantic Era Bach became a deeply religious composer of church music, when he was dubbed “the fifth Evangelist,” a view which held far into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1960s the trend in interpretation turned toward secularism. Even the esteemed Lutheran historian, Friedrich Blume, suggested that Bach was not particularly religious at all. Bach was a man who was shrewd enough to go where his creative self-awareness could best be used, whether in the church or in the court.

It is the assertion of this study that between such hagiography and secularization Bach stands as a Lutheran, deeply orthodox and pious. Whether in the church or at the court he composed and performed to the glory of God and for the good of his neighbor. He was a theological musician, although not a theologian in the strict sense of one who writes a dogmatics text or *loci communes*. Bach was a theological musician in Luther’s estimation that *oratio*, *meditatio* and *tentatio* make a theologian.<sup>62</sup> These three influences were woven into Bach’s life and music,

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<sup>60</sup> See Joyce Irwin, *Neither Voice nor Heart Alone*, pp. 141ff; Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, pp. 314-315.

<sup>61</sup> See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Bach Among the Theologians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician*; Robin Leaver, *Bach’s Theological Library: A Critical Bibliography* (Stuttgart: Neuhausen Verlag, 1983). Leaver and Wolff are especially appreciative of Bach’s Lutheran insights.

<sup>62</sup> “I want to point out to you a correct way of studying theology, for I have had practice in that.... This is the way taught by holy King David (and doubtlessly used also by all the patriarchs and prophets) in the one hundred nineteenth Psalm. There you will find three rules, amply presented throughout the whole Psalm. They are *Oratio*, *Meditatio*, *Tentatio*.” Martin Luther, “Preface to the



liturgically ordered by his regular and frequent attending to the preaching of the Gospel and the receiving of the Sacrament in the *Gottesdienst* of the congregations he served.

Friedrich Smend, whose critical edition of the work was included in the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, was convinced that Bach wrote a purely Lutheran work which only bears a superficial relation to the *Ordo* of the Catholic Mass.

As a whole, this Mass has no place in the Lutheran worship service, and at the same time it is unlikely that it was expressly written for a particular Catholic rite.... Bach probably wished to compose in a field that represented the highest achievement since the time of Josquin and Palestrina, who elevated the Mass to an independent work of art. Bach took it outside the realm of the liturgy, as an expression of his personal mastery.<sup>63</sup>

Smend, like others before him, is uncomfortable with the proximity of this Lutheran composition to Roman Catholicism. It is a discomfort that others have expressed concerning the great work's proximity to Christianity. Reflecting the increasingly secularized understandings of Bach's work, one scholar has concluded, "The B-Minor Mass is a church work that transcends the church."<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, in the light of more recent scholarship which has been undertaken within the context of Bach's own theological library—a library which contained two complete sets of Luther's works and the three volumes of the Calov edition of the Bible with Bach's own marginal notes—the picture of the Mass as a Lutheran work emerges more clearly.

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Wittenberg Edition of Luther's German Writings," *Luther's Works, Vol. 34* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. 285.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in George B. Stauffer, *The Mass in B Minor* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), p. 256. Stauffer comments, "Smend, who descended from a long line of Lutheran theologians, found the entire notion of Bach composing music for a Catholic ruler...odious." *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Stauffer, *The Mass in B Minor*, p. ix.



While Bach's turning to set the Ordinary of the Mass placed him among the great composers of the past who composed Mass settings, it also placed him in the company of Martin Luther and the confessors at Augsburg in 1530. After the long and painful era of inter- and intra-confessional polemics, together with the Thirty Years War, Bach's confession of the Christian faith in his Mass is a distinct confession of the catholic nature of Lutheranism. The confessors at Augsburg declared to the assembled Diet:

As can be seen, there is nothing here that departs from the Scriptures or the catholic church, or from the Roman church, insofar as we can tell from its writers.<sup>65</sup>

Even within the second part of the *Augustana*, in the articles concerning abuses, the Lutheran confessors could maintain: "Our churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass. In fact, the Mass is retained among us and is celebrated with the greatest reverence."<sup>66</sup> Bach's Mass in B minor embraced the theological-musical understanding set forth in Luther's *Formula Missae* and the Reformation understanding of liturgy shaped by theology with a Lutheran simultaneity of ancient tradition and contemporary practice, of catholic order and evangelical confession, of learned science and affective apprehension.

Some examples from the *Credo* portion of the Mass may serve as illustration. Bach's intricate and inspiring symmetries in his music are well-documented. Yet in the *Symbolum Nicenum*, as he entitled the *Credo*, the symmetry expresses particularly Lutheran insights. Composed in nine movements from an earlier eight-part plan, the *Credo* revolves around the center movement in a chiastic

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<sup>65</sup> *Augsburg Confession*, Conclusion, Part I:1

<sup>66</sup> *Augsburg Confession* XXIV:1



design (*Fig. 11*, below). That center movement is the *Crucifixus*. This chiastic focus on the death of Jesus is an expression of Luther's theology of the cross.

In John 14...Philip speaks according to the theology of glory: 'Show us the Father.' Christ forthwith set aside his flighty thoughts about seeing God elsewhere and led him to himself, saying, 'He who has seen me has seen the Father.' For this reason true theology and recognition of God are in the crucified Christ.<sup>67</sup>

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- 1. 'Credo in unum Deum' – chorus
  - 2. 'Patrem omnipotentem' – chorus
  - 3. 'Et in unum Dominum' – duet
    - 4. 'Et incarnatus est' – chorus
    - 5. 'Crucifixus' – chorus
    - 6. 'Et resurrexit' – chorus
  - 7. 'Et in Spiritum sanctum' – solo
  - 8. 'Confiteor' – chorus
  - 9. 'Et expecto' – chorus

*Figure 11* The symmetry of the *Credo*

Following Luther's insights, Bach's symmetry radiates from the *Crucifixus* back toward the opening *Credo in unum deum*, confessing God the Father, whose nature is hidden in the suffering and death of the Christ. Lutheran theology approaches the confession of God the Father "from below."

The Scriptures begin very gently, and lead us on to Christ as to man, and then to the one who is Lord over all creatures, and after that to one who is God. So do I enter delightfully and learn to know God. But the philosophers and doctors have insisted on beginning from above. We begin below, and after that move upwards.<sup>68</sup>

From the central, distinctive event of the crucifixion, the symmetrical flow of Bach's *Credo* carries the listener to the Lutheran confession of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian, formed in and by the cross of Jesus Christ. Unlike the Pietists who tended to move toward an independent Holy Spirit, Lutheran

<sup>67</sup> Martin Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, p. 53.

<sup>68</sup> Martin Luther; quoted in David P. Scaer, *Christology*, Vol. 12, *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics* (Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1989), p. 9.



theology explicates the Holy Spirit in relation to the work of Christ, as drawn from the Gospel according to St. John.<sup>69</sup>

This chiastic movement from the cross of the Son to the confession of the Father and to confessing the work of the Holy Spirit is stressed by *cantus firmus* movements in the paired choruses at the beginning and at the end of the *Credo*. The opening *Credo in unum deum* is set in the *stile antico* reminiscent of Palestrina and employs the Gregorian melody as the *cantus firmus*. The effect is an expression of the ancient nature of faith in God. Subsequently, the penultimate movement, the *Confiteor*, likewise employs the *stile antico* together with the Gregorian melody as the *cantus firmus*. The ancient faith of confessing God, whose hiddenness is revealed in the crucified Son, is the same ancient faith—as Bach musically portrays—which is given in and with Holy Baptism, through which the baptized is united with the crucified and risen Son.

Musically the *Crucifixus* centerpiece is a parody movement. Bach utilizes previously composed music at this point. It is significant that the music he chooses was once used to set the text of the cantata, BWV 12, *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*. That text, with its strong Pietistic flavor, captured the “weeping, wailing, grieving, fearing” of the Christian entrapped by sin and death. Bach heightens that Pietistic individualism by musically assigning the “weeping, wailing, grieving, fearing” to Jesus’ own suffering and death on the cross.

Making no secret of his musical parody, the Lutheran Bach confesses that comfort in the midst of human suffering comes not merely in that a Christian shares in suffering *like* Christ; comfort comes in knowing that human suffering is a *sharing*

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<sup>69</sup> See, for example, John 19:30, where the Evangelist uses the language of Pentecost to record Jesus’ death. “He gave up [literally “gave out,” *παρέδωκεν*] his spirit.”



in Christ's suffering. The music's descending, chromatic ground bass, set in E minor, the same key as the opening chorus of his *Matthäus Passion*, together with the sighing of the choral writing, all combine to portray a subtle and musically expressive confession of this portion of the Creed. Yet Bach retains his most expressive moments for the end of the *Crucifixus*, where the glory of the cross is set, *sub contrario*, by a sudden *a capella* texture as the instruments cease playing while the chorus continues to sing *sepultus est* in the lowest portion of their voice ranges.

After an intense "eternity" in a moment of silence the *Et resurrexit* movement erupts with full orchestra, including trumpets and tympani, sounding for the first time in the *Credo* together with five-part chorus singing in festive, celebratory, dance-like style in the brilliant key of D Major. "It is difficult to imagine a piece of music that would more forcefully, and irrevocably, dispel the chromatic gloom of the E-minor lament."<sup>70</sup> Yet, for Bach the Lutheran theological musician, this D Major jubilation does not erase the "E minor lament" in its dispelling brilliance, anymore than the resurrection of Christ erased His crucifixion. In Lutheran theology the two are always together, though each is complete. On the cross is heard the Johannine cry of triumph, "It is finished!" and on Easter the resurrection is entirely "new," yet neither bears meaning without the other. Bach captures this Lutheran *simul* with a subtle augmented sixth chord at the end of the *Crucifixus*, in anticipation of the resurrection. It is the same compositional technique Bach employs to unite the *Confiteor* movement with the *Et expecto*, as indeed Holy Baptism's burial with Christ is united with the promised hope of resurrection with Christ.

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<sup>70</sup> Stauffer, *The Mass in B Minor*, p. 125.



Werckmeister, for example, describes an enharmonic modulation from E major to F minor as a 'great metamorphosis in the harmony,' a place where 'in an instant one passes from one genus to another.' That such a device is uniquely appropriate for the anticipation of the resurrection is suggested in Werckmeister's allegorical writings on music, when he calls tempered music a 'mirror and image of our mortality and incompleteness of this life' and the clarino [extreme upper] register of the trumpet an anticipation of the life to come.<sup>71</sup>

The image shows two systems of a musical score. The first system, numbered 132, contains several staves with musical notation and Latin lyrics. The second system, numbered 140, also contains multiple staves with notation and lyrics, and is marked with the tempo 'Vivace e Allegro'. The lyrics are in Latin and appear to be from a Mass, specifically the Credo. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

Figure 12 The bridge between the *Confiteor* and the *Et expecto*

Furthermore, the emphasis Bach places on Holy Baptism (as the Sacrament by which the death and resurrection of Christ becomes the promise of resurrection in death for the baptized) by his composition of an entire movement for it within the *Credo*, is also a means to confess the Church. That Bach would set Holy Baptism within its own movement while setting the confession of one holy, catholic and

<sup>71</sup> Eric Chafe, *Tonal Allegory in the Vocal Music of J. S. Bach* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 83.



apostolic Church within the movement concerning the Holy Spirit is not a slighting of the Church, nor (as is often suggested) an example of the Lutheran weaknesses in ecclesiology. Bach's music leads the hearer to find the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church within Holy Baptism.

The *signification* of baptism as death and resurrection not only determines the nature of the Christian pilgrimage; it also shapes the life of the Church. It denotes the Church as a community which lives under the 'holy cross', in weakness, trials and sufferings. ...the Church is the community of the baptised, who are dying to the things of one world in order to know the life of another.<sup>72</sup>

That hiddenness "now" for the baptized is expressed by Bach in the bridge between the *Confiteor* and the *Et expecto* movements. Bach uses the homophonic texture, the bass motif and tempo from the *Crucifixus*, together with the augmented sixth modulation, to tie the glory of Christ's resurrection hidden in His cross with the glory of the resurrection for the baptized, a glory hidden now in the lowliness of Holy Baptism.<sup>73</sup>

Other observations may be made when one begins from the point of departure that this Mass in B minor is a Lutheran work. It is a theological-musical work rooted in the deepest meanings of the Lutheran understanding of *Gottesdienst*. Without a doubt it is a work of transcendent appeal, of great compositional gifts used in the maturity of a profound composer's life. Yet the very greatness of the Mass in B minor is that it is a theological-musical confession of the Christian faith, formed and nurtured by the Lutheran Confessions in general and by Martin Luther's

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<sup>72</sup> Jonathan D. Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, Inc., 2001), p. 198. Trigg develops the theme in Luther's understanding of Baptism *viz.*, the Christian life: *semper es in motu et initio* ("always in motion and at the beginning"). There is something of this sense in the symmetry and flow of Bach's *Symbolum Nicenum*.

<sup>73</sup> Bach uses the augmented sixth chord as a modulating device in one other place in his *Credo*. It occurs at the end of the *Et incarnatus* movement to unite it with the following *Crucifixus*. Again, it is Bach's Lutheranism which, instead of imbuing the *Et incarnatus* with Christmas joy, endows it with humiliation. The cross impacts both the Incarnation and the Resurrection.



theology in particular. Given the tremendous changes taking place in music before and during Bach's time, it comes as no surprise that Friedrich Blume could assess his music in such admiring terms: "historical Lutheranism became altogether synonymous with music, and Bach, standing at the close of a historically burdened tradition, was able to awaken the power of 'mystic sounds,' which, though hidden under a false sense of tradition, were yet still 'miraculously slumbering.'"<sup>74</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The Lutheran aesthetic in music suffered during this period because music became formed and informed on the basis of feelingful experience and reason apart from, to a greater and lesser degree, divine revelation in Scripture. Nevertheless, despite the shifting of the center from a *Verbum musicum* toward feeling or reason or a combination of the two (and not only despite the shift but also because of it, as the *theologia crucis* holds), as the shift continued to incorporate the preaching of the Gospel, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in the gathered fellowship of the worshiping Lutheran congregation, the Lutheran aesthetic in music did not suffer as much as in the radical breaks from the Lutheran emphasis on the external Word (*verbum externum*) as evidenced in extreme Pietism or Rationalism.

In the coming era of Romanticism some will try to preserve Bach's full art by turning it into principles, as some attempted to do with the music of Luther's day. The attempt will preserve an outward form but, as the Law always does, will kill the creative freedom and Gospel-formed order of Bach's music. Others will carry on the feeling-based center developed in Pietism's experientialism and Rationalism's

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<sup>74</sup> Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, p. 314.



*Empfindsamkeit*. These efforts will distort the Lutheran aesthetic in music by attempting a holiness of beauty. The true Lutheran aesthetic, a beauty of holiness revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will undergo a renaissance with the “Second Reformation” of 1817. This rebirth will call Lutheran theologians and musicians back to a Christological center, where the twin sisters, theology and music, *sing’ und sag’* by the Gospel.



## Chapter 4 *Tone Poem: The Sonorous Word* The Trajectory Beyond Romanticism

*There is so much talk about music, and yet so little is said.* — Felix Mendelssohn

Musicologists grapple with descriptions and definitions for the era in music which spanned most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; the period called the Romantic Era. The Romantic Era has been termed a reaction against the classicism of the previous era. It has been called a literary era in which, ironically, instrumental music reached loftier positions of musical art than vocal music. The Romantic Era has been described as an awakening to the past and as a coming to grips with how that awakened past impacts the present. “It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.”<sup>1</sup>

These contrasts, however, are not all mutually exclusive, like day and night, or white and black. They are contrasts like the positive and negative poles in an electro-chemical state. A relationship of tension always exists between these poles, a lively stream which flows from the one to the other. In Romantic music the enemies are not conceivable one without the other.<sup>2</sup>

Music in the life of the Lutheran Church during this period is likewise a collection of seeming contradictions which, upon closer examination, are “inconceivable one without the other.” Pietism’s feelingful experiences and Rationalism’s fine art of *Empfindsamkeit* continue to impact church music, and yet a renaissance in Lutheran Confessionalism springs to life early in the era. The simple

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<sup>1</sup> For fascinating examples of the challenge to describe this era, see Alfred Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1947), pp. 3-9; Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1980), pp. 549-558; Paul Henry Lang, *Music in Western Civilization* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1941), pp. 801-809.

<sup>2</sup> Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, p. 7.



art of congregational songs and the high art of works for choirs and orchestras stand in mutual tension.

This brief overview of a complex era in Lutheran Church music will focus on hymnody as it developed in the Scandinavian churches—with N. F. S. Grundtvig in Denmark and L. Lindeman in Norway. The Swedish bishop and theologian, U. L. Ullman, will present a persuasive argument for why Christianity needs the arts. Finally two very different yet similar composers, Felix Mendelssohn and Johannes Brahms, will reveal how theology finds expression in the Lutheran music of this contradictory century.

### *Grundtvig's Fusions—The Word Across Time*

Few Lutherans have embraced Luther's dictum of *singen und sagen* to the extent of Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872). The sermons of this Dane are proclamations of the Gospel at once prose and at the same time poetry. As for Grundtvig's hymns, they are more than mere poetry. They are tone poems crying out to be sung rather than read, if their fullest expression of meaning is to be comprehended.

Grundtvig pressed the Lutheran concept of "Word" to its fullest extent (although some critics would say that he pushed it beyond its limits<sup>3</sup>). Echoing Martin Luther, Grundtvig insisted that the Church was no *Skriptkirke*, a house built simply on a written book, the Bible. The Church is built on the living Word, a preached Word, a confessed Word, a Sacramental Word drawn from the Scriptural

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<sup>3</sup> See Ernest D. Nielsen, *N. F. S. Grundtvig: An American Study* (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Press, 1955), pp. 64ff; also Jens Holger Schjørring, "Church Continuity and the Challenge of Modernity," *Heritage and Prophecy: Grundtvig and the English-Speaking World*, ed. A.M. Allchin, D. Jasper, J.H. Schjørring, and K. Stevenson (Norwich: The Canterbury Press, 1994), pp. 204-208.



Word. The Word is living, spoken and sung. As Luther could bluntly declare, “Printed words are dead, spoken words are living. On the printed page they are not so forcible as when uttered by the soul of man through the mouth.”<sup>4</sup>

When Grundtvig recast Luther’s *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* in 1817 he said, *Guds Ord det er vort Arvegods*, [‘God’s Word is our great heritage’] But in the *Sangværk* of 1837: *Guds-Ordet er vort Arvegods* [‘The Word of God is our great heritage’], where *Guds-Ordet* is emphasized and distinguished with the typed hyphen as an outer witness that *Guds-Ordet* is something other and more than *Guds Ord*. *Guds-Ordet*, in the definite form [‘the’, *-et*], presents it as something wholly concrete. In all events, it is the *perception* [*anskuelsen*] that it indicates the difference between God’s word [*Guds Ord*] and God’s Word [*Guds-Ordet*] so clearly expressed in the famous line: *Kun ved Badet og ved Bordet Hører vi Gud’s Ord til os* [‘With the Bath and with the Table are we able to hear God’s Word to us.’] And this wholly concrete *Ord* is, among other things, the Confession of Faith [*Trosbekendelsen*, that is, the Apostles’ Creed used in Holy Baptism] and the Words of Institution [*Indstiftelsesordene*, that is, the *Verba Testamenti* of the Lord’s Supper].<sup>5</sup>

This living Word of God (*Guds-Ordet*)—living because the Christ lives in the Word and speaks in the singing and saying of the assembled, worshiping congregation—awakened a musical-poetic spring in Grundtvig.

Drawing on the Pietist appreciation for nature and inspired in part by the hymn texts of his fellow Dane, Hans Adolph Brorson, Grundtvig portrayed creation in its sacramental role as a living Word which finds its voice in song. For Grundtvig in nature’s voice one hears the living Word, unlike in Romanticism which tends to deify nature itself.

The care of vineyards and the tilling of fields  
Makes for men upon earth  
Bread for life and the strength of the heart,  
Above all on the Lord’s Table;  
For there, in the tents of the Word,  
Earth and heaven are fused together [*sammensmelte*]

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Nielsen, *N. F. S. Grundtvig: An American Study*, p. 118, n34.

<sup>5</sup> Christian Thodberg, *En glemt dimension i Grundtvigs salmer* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads Forlag, 1969), p. 10



He who takes the Lord  
At His Word, as it sounds out here,  
Rejoices in nectar and ambrosia.<sup>6</sup>

It was one of Grundtvig's criticisms of the "book-bound" Lutheran dogmaticians that in his perception they missed the power of the living Word because they were too confined to the written explications of the faith. With their primary focus on the words of the printed page, Grundtvig concluded that the dogmaticians' conception of the faith had become separated from creation and humanity's creaturely existence. Nevertheless Grundtvig is not simply a Romantic who promotes a sentimental nature-based religion, which is only secondarily supported by Biblical and Lutheran theology.<sup>7</sup>

Yes, we shall consider nature as God's work, in us and around us, which shall in no way be hated, mistreated and destroyed, but loved, cleansed, healed and sanctified, yes, which should share in the same glory, which in the Spirit we already rejoice in, the whole nature, as well as our hearts, sigh, for which the whole nature longs with a wonderful hope. In no way then should we set *nature and revelation* [italics original] in opposition to one another, as things incompatible with each other; rather, we should call revelation nature's light and salvation, as our Lord Jesus Christ calls Himself the Light and Savior of the world...<sup>8</sup>

This unity or "fusing together" (*sammensmelte*) of faith and nature was but one of many "fusings together" in Grundtvig's hymns. In a delightfully creative fusion of time and eternity, together with the realms of the spirit and nature, the

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<sup>6</sup> Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig, *Sang-Værk til den Danske Kirke, Bind 1.1, No. 145* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad Forlag, 1982), pp. 325. The English translation is by A. M. Allchin, one of only a few who have written extensively and appreciatively in English of Grundtvig's contributions.

<sup>7</sup> A. M. Allchin criticizes such Romanticism. "On the contrary [Grundtvig] is a theologian and prophet who is making much stranger and more challenging affirmations than [Romanticism]. For him it is the incarnation of the Word and above all the resurrection of Christ from the dead which provide the true foundation and direction for the world both of human history and of universal nature...In some mysterious way the events of redemption precede those of creation or at the very least decisively clarify and transfigure them." A. M. Allchin, *N. F. S. Grundtvig: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd., 1998), p. 179.

<sup>8</sup> Grundtvig, quoted in A. M. Allchin, *N. F. S. Grundtvig*, pp. 148-149.



living Word finds expression in the singing poet of the hymn. Few of Grundtvig’s hymns demonstrate his *sammensmelte* ability than the hymn, *Skyerne graaner*, often sung in Advent to a tune by Thora Borch (Fig. 1, below). The hymn is based on Grundtvig’s poem, *Efteraaaret* (1847).

1.     The clouds become gray, the leaves fall,  
          The birds sing no longer.  
          Winter threatens and night calls,  
          The flowers sigh, ‘it is snowing’  
          And yet we carry the flame with joy.
2.     Winter comes, the snow falls,  
          The flowers wither in the earth.  
          The ice is not thawed by weeping for Balder  
          The tears freeze in the cold.  
          And yet we carry the flame with joy.



Figure 1 The Thora Borch tune of 1866 for Grundtvig's poem, *Efteraaaret*; in musical setting more commonly known by the first line of the poem, *Skyerne graaner*

The autumn and winter seasons silence the singing of the birds and nature’s living song, yet “we”, the human poet-singers, “carry the flame with joy.” In a Lutheran *theologia crucis* the melancholy of passing seasons does not inhibit the joy that is carried in the singer’s “living” flame. In fact the joy is heightened by the melancholy. In the fusion of the harvest, a fruitful time in the fall, together with the



beginning of a deterioration, the darkness of approaching winter, still the song is a triumph song, for in the darkness we see light. In the winter the Christ is born.<sup>9</sup>

3. The solstice comes, the leaf is turned,  
The days grow longer again.  
The sunshine grows and winter ends,  
The larks sing in the sky;  
Therefore we carry the flame with joy.
4. The years change for fear of old age.  
The poets are in accord with them,  
All the birds molt every year  
Or else they cannot fly freely,  
Therefore we carry the flame with joy.

With allusions to pre-Christian, Nordic mythology and the mid-winter which longs for the return of light and the spring, Grundtvig unites himself and the singer with those ancient singers of the sagas to melt the distant past into the living present, fusing death and life as Christ's cross and resurrection are always together.

Grundtvig's studies of Norse and Anglo-Saxon mythology gave added impetus to his growing understanding of the Christian faith as a living spirit of Christ's Spirit in human beings.

Everything hangs together [in Danish, *sammenhægen*, which implies a connection, a context, a coherence] and can be stretched out in a long historical sequence, or it can be made into a concentrated power behind the interpretation of the individual myth, which will then lend a value of experience to what would otherwise not stretch very far. ...a feeling for bringing alive the past and the present is always there in Grundtvig. In the union of spirit and dust, in the union of history and the moment, he administers the Old Norse cultural heritage so that it can be felt to this day. The key word is coherence. Whatever does not rhyme cannot be carried.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "The poem is comprehended as consisting of three clear parts—the Pauline voice of creation [Romans 8:22-24] (I), the Spirit (II) and Redemption (III); and in the poem Grundtvig also compiles nature, the human spirit and Christianity within it. For him harvest and beginning are as one, such as it is in nature and human life, but only in faith can it be perceived. In the title [*Efteraaret*] he has carried out one of his flashes of remarkable contraction in thought and faith." Jens Kruuse, "Efteraaret: En tolkning af et Grundtvig-digt," *Guldalder Studier: Festskrift til Gustav Albeck* (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1966), p.132.

<sup>10</sup> Andreas Haarder. "Grundtvig and the Old Norse Cultural Heritage". *N. F. S. Grundtvig: Tradition and Renewal*, trans. Edward Broadbridge (Copenhagen: Det Danske Selskab, 1983), p. 84.



Now Grundtvig comes to the middle stanzas of this song, singing of the poets who, like the birds, span the great distances; the distances of life and death, of time and eternity.

5.     The birds fly like wind on the wings  
        Freely over the wild sea,  
        Poets fly as the rhymes ring  
        Smoothly over the graves of generations.  
        Therefore we carry the flame with joy.
6.     Hearts stagger, when they beat high,  
        Are drawn to the track of the birds.  
        Yet light conquers; the dark thought  
        Fleeing sinks in the earth.  
        Therefore we carry the flame with joy.

There is now an aspect of fear and trembling in spanning such distances. The poet-singer's art is not without its risks. A living faith, likewise, is not without its darker moments (afflictions, *anfægtelser*). The living Word in creation, however, gives His light for the path. "The Light shines in the darkness."

There is a surprising, change in the mood of the last three stanzas with a turn in the subject. Yet it is not really a turn in subject, but rather, once again, a fusing of time and eternity, of nature and spirit and, now, of all humankind with the one Man—united with His "crib" of Christmas and with His "spring" of Easter:

7.     The hymns resound, the bells ring out  
        Mock the Christmas snow.  
        Winter must rhyme itself with spring  
        Melt before the sun which is hiding;  
        Therefore we carry the flame with joy.
8.     Hearts that believe, in the course of winter  
        Give birth to the delight of spring,  
        Clasp it to themselves in swaddling clothes  
        With a happy new year.  
        Therefore we carry the flame with joy.



9. The Child of Bethlehem in the crib,  
He is the eternal spring.  
Believing hearts have gathered that  
Christmas makes a happy new year.  
Therefore we carry the flame with joy.<sup>11</sup>

While Grundtvig has become known for his motto, drawn from the title of a sermon, “First a man, then a Christian” (*Menneske først og Kristen så*), those startling and sometimes disconcerting words are open to misunderstanding apart from Grundtvig’s incredible poetic gift of fusing together the One who is simultaneously the Man and the Christ with the many human beings (“men”) who become Christian, as well as the many who are yet to become Christian.

When a juxtaposition...is made possible between symbols in liturgy, poetry and art on the one hand and arguments distinguished by lucid rationality on the other, Grundtvig’s theology [can] have an impact for us today.<sup>12</sup>

#### *The Norwegian Hymn Controversy—The Musical Form of Confessionalism*

The Confessional Renewal movement among German Lutherans that grew out of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation in 1817, also witnessed a push to restore the Reformation Era chorales to their original rhythmic settings. This Lutheran musical reform in Germany, inspired by a renewed allegiance to the Lutheran Confessions, was advanced by the publications of Carl von Winterfield (*Der evangelische Kirchengesang und sein Verhältniss zur Kunst des Tonsatzes*, 1843-47), Gottlieb von Tucher (*Schatz des evangelischen Kirchengesangs im ersten Jahrhundert der Reformation*, 1848) and Friedrich Layriz (*Kern des deutschen*

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<sup>11</sup> N. F. S. Grundtvig, “Efteraaret”. *Værker i Udvalg. Bd. VIII, Digte 1824-1872* (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel-Norsk Forlag, 1942). pp. 254-255. The English translation is by A. M. Allchin.

<sup>12</sup> Schjørring, *Heritage and Prophecy*. p. 230.



*Kirchengesangs*, 1844).<sup>13</sup> Their limited success in reinstating the rhythmic form of the chorales in the hymnal for the Lutheran Church in Bavaria, motivated some church musicians in the Church of Norway to call for a similar establishment of the chorales in their original rhythmic settings.

The primary cause for this enthusiasm was the sad state of congregational singing at the time. The combined effects of Pietism and Rationalism, with an emphasis on edification and simplicity in the former and an *empfindsamlich* solemnity in the latter, had refashioned the rhythmic vitality of the Reformation chorales into hymns of uniform rhythms and snail-like tempos.

Each syllable is sung without distinction for a period of about four beats; on the last syllable of each line or at the end of the melodic phrase there follows a long fermata lasting 8-12 beats, the last part of which is incorporated in a more or less intricate organ interlude. So all the melodies follow one line after the other in this repetitious manner, whether sad or joyous, mournful or exultant, all performed in a creeping, dragging fashion. The hymns of Luther have had their wings clipped and have put on the straightjacket of 4/4 time. And so it came about that the more inflexible the singing of the chorale was, the more solemn it was thought to be.<sup>14</sup>

Fast singing was not considered dignified or churchly. The rhythmic irregularities of the chorales in their original forms were deemed too difficult for congregational singing and too abrupt for enhancing the proper sentiments in worship.

The earliest advocate for the reintroduction of the rhythmic chorales into the Norwegian Church was Johan D. Behrens. In 1858 he published a work entitled *Om den lutherske Salmesang og dens Gjenindførelse i den norske Kirke* ("Concerning the Luther hymns and their influence in the Norwegian Church"). Behrens's enthusiasm for the rhythmic chorales grew out of his experiences with the

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<sup>13</sup> See Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, pp.378-382. for a thorough discussion of this movement.

<sup>14</sup> From an editorial in *Evang. Kirchenzeitung*, 1847, No. 84; quoted in Carl Schalk, *The Roots of Hymnody in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, "Church Music Pamphlet Series" (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 25.



*Männerchor* developments in Germany, in which the men's choruses sang folksongs and the rhythmic chorales with equal zest and appeal.

Behrens's publication was reviewed in print by Ludvig Mathias Lindeman (1812-1877), the esteemed organist at Our Savior's Church in Christiania (Oslo). Lindeman was also a renowned compiler of Norwegian folk music. Writing in the newspaper, *Morgenbladet*, Lindeman criticized Behrens's suggestions, offering a mistaken conclusion that both the rhythmic chorales and folk music sprang from the same secular musical source. Since, as Lindeman mistakenly concluded, both sprang from a secular source, they were unsuited for congregational singing.

Additionally, Lindeman was trained in the J. S. Bach-Johann Kirnberger musical school of thought. Although Bach's understanding of music was set in principles according to the understanding of his student, Kirnberger, and therefore not necessarily an accurate interpretation of Bach's own views (Kirnberger altered Bach's Gospel-inspired art by a Law-based codification), it was a musical style defined as "strict":

In the strict style every chord, and almost every note in the vocal parts, is stressed; fewer decorations of the melody, or fewer passing notes that are not indicated in the figures, occur. However, in freer or lighter style some chords are skipped over and thus have less emphasis.... The strict style is used mainly in church music, whose content is always serious or solemn. But the other is particularly appropriate to the theatre and to concerts, where one is more concerned with the amusement of the listener than the awakening of more serious or solemn feelings.<sup>15</sup>

One may see in this why folk music with its ornamented style, and the rhythmic vitality of the chorales, failed to meet the standard of church music in the "Bach (as interpreted by Kirnberger)–Lindeman" school of interpretation.

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<sup>15</sup> Johann Kirnberger. *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 99.





Figure 2 Two contrasting settings of the chorale, *Come Now to Me God's Son Doth Say*. The setting, above, is by Ole Andreas Lindeman, Ludvig Lindeman's father, in even-note rhythm. Ludvig M. Lindeman's setting is below. It is more rhythmically vital, but not like the near original rhythm of the Winter-Hjelm setting (See Fig. 3, next page).







Figure 3 Otto Winter-Hjelm's setting of *Come Now to Me God's Son Doth Say*. The original rhythmic setting of the chorale as it appeared in Hans Thomissøn's *Psalmebog 1569* is below.





Otto Winter-Hjelm (1837-1931), another church musician, took up Behrens's position concerning the rhythmic chorales. Writing as a critic with the newspaper, *Aftenposten*, Winter-Hjelm praised the impact on the singer and the listener when the chorales are used in their original setting:

Some people find particular inspiration chiefly in singing chorales, but on the other hand, rhythm manifests itself in all folk melodies. Folk music has surmounted the limitations of declamation and meter/measure monotony...holding beauty and truth high in all shades of nuance, and has, in combination with classical artworks, through rhythmic melodies and melodic rhythms, preserved the 'apples of Ithunn'<sup>16</sup> in which a decrepit art music has sought new youth and strength for itself, without which, at length, all productivity will cease. This burden of thought recognizes the Protestant Church's melodies as the quintessence of many centuries of musical inspiration—the best of them are taken from folk music, from melodies which the people had appropriated for themselves before they became adapted for churchly use. That one has not been able to take the life out of them despite all mishandling, owes assuredly not alone to the circumstance that the old *salmer* have been held in high esteem... but also the melodies themselves have the witness of strength conveying a solemn, heartfelt faith and holy inspiration.<sup>17</sup>

This critique would not go unanswered by the opponents of the rhythmic chorales. A professor of philosophy, M. J. Monrad, derided the restorationist view as historical sentimentalism:

Church songs, as such, are not something which express some individual's peculiar feelings, but express the whole congregation's devotional fear. It is essential, then, that they have a general, universal character, and that all individual characteristics have a negligible meaning. In the church ask not after what is old or new, what is especially to be heard in this period of time or that; ask after what is true, lovely and fitting. Congregational song...shall be an expression of the congregation's *present devotion* [italics in the original]. Not proper contents, not what sort of past world remains to influence the congregation, but precisely what the congregation appropriates thereof and in what manner it sings therewith is of primary importance.... The taste in our time, which seeks precisely a

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<sup>16</sup> Ithunn is the goddess/wife of Bragi in Norse mythology, who guarded the golden apples (*Idunsepler*) in Aasgard, eaten by the gods to preserve their youth.

<sup>17</sup> O. Winter-Hjelm; quoted in O. M. Sandvik, *Norsk Koralhistorie* (Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co., 1930), p. 48.



singular interest in individual characteristics, extends itself over all artistic domains and produces Pre-Raphaelitism, Nazarenism, Neo-Gothicism and whatever confiscated tendencies are to be named. They must be regarded as the fruit of a fashion over-matured and over-refined with the time, in which one longs to return to something more innocent and unspoiled.... But they do not deny that this same sound taste can become an alluring pleasure: to be abandoned in a naïve art form of the distant past; to hear, for example, music in which a form of a past living spirit and its clarity for a past life are encountered. But this pleasure—exclusive of scholastic, historical interest—remains for the essential part an artistic *illusion* [italics in the original].<sup>18</sup>

The polemical writings over the rhythmic chorales and their possible inclusion in the worship life of the Norwegian Church continued for weeks and months in the various newspapers around Christiania. “One must be astonished today over how much space the newspapers of the time placed at the disposal of such a highly technical and wholly complex musical-theoretical debate.”<sup>19</sup>

The committee established by the Church to settle the hymnal issue became split between the two positions—two members of the committee favored the inclusion of the rhythmic chorales, two members opposed their inclusion. It fell to the chairman of the committee, Lindeman, to cast the deciding vote. He voted against the rhythmic chorales.

Lindeman’s siding with the opponents of the rhythmic chorales, and consequently their omission from the new hymnal, does not imply that he had no sympathy for those who espoused a more lively approach to congregational singing. Because Lindeman considered the Divine Service, and the church nave in which it was conducted, to be sacred, anything which hinted at worldly influences or origins was not appropriate—whether this included the rhythmically vital chorales or the

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<sup>18</sup> M. J. Monrad, quoted in Sandvik. *Norsk Koralhistorie*, p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> *Norges Musikk Historie, Bd. 2, 1814-70 Den Nasjonale Tone*, ed. Arvid O. Vollsnes (Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co., 2000), p. 144.



rich folksong tradition of which Lindeman himself was keenly familiar. Rather than employ repristinated chorales, he would compose new hymn tunes in the chorale style. These compositions embodied both the “old peace and dignity” [*gamle ro og vælighet*] of the more recent hymn tradition as well as the simple folksong-like forms, made lively by the use of dotted rhythms.

Lindeman’s hymn tunes immediately were acclaimed as sensational. They became the model of new hymn tunes in Germany, Denmark and Sweden. Wilhelm Bauck, in a lecture of 1873 at the *Musikaliska Akademien* in Stockholm, Sweden, conceded, “The church music in Christiania [Oslo] has, through its ardent harmony between art and cult...caused it to earn attention. We expect it to stimulate yet greater means with ringing results.”<sup>20</sup> At Lindeman’s funeral it was said, “He taught the Norwegian people to sing.”

Assessing Lindeman’s considerable impact on church music in Norway during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, O. M. Sandvik could still claim in 1918,

Such melodies are Lindeman’s strength and imperishable legacy. Norwegian church folk bear in their hearts hymns such as *Kirken den er et gammelt hus* and *Herre Jesu Krist* indissolubly united to his tunes.<sup>21</sup>

Yet Sandvik recognized that Lindeman’s middle way was not sufficient.

His harmonizations are sonorous, with a sense for the general impression of phrasing. He can fashion a distinctive pliancy for rather stiff, rough melodies through his contrapuntal methods. But—not all melodies are suitable for so ‘modern’ a treatment as Lindeman gives them. The whole share of the old core chorales [*kjernekoraler*]...on the contrary call for a singularly clear, simple harmony so that their true nature should be unveiled. They are conceived from a somewhat different spirit of melodic feeling than in

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted in *Norges Musikk Historie*, Bd. 2. p. 145. Given the political climate between Norway and Sweden—after a brief independence from Denmark in 1812. Norway was “given” to Sweden as a reward for Sweden’s opposition to Napoleon. Denmark having sided with Napoleon—such praise is to be counted as high indeed.

<sup>21</sup> O. M. Sandvik, *Norsk Kirekmusik og dens Kilder* (Christiania: Steenske Forlag, 1918), p. 73.



our day. They are, namely, created in the old church tone art, not in our *dur* and *moll* [major and minor]. So appealing in and of themselves as his harmonizations can be with their melodiousness and unceasing variation, they rob the old tone somewhat of its enormous monumentality, its cool peace [*kjølige ro*] and its simple lack of ostentation [*prunkløshet*].<sup>22</sup>

When the new hymnal for *Den Norske Kirke* finally appeared in 1877, it bore Lindeman's stamp. Yet the various factions continued to influence the musical practices among the congregations in Christiania. In the 1870s a worshiper could still experience the musical style of the Pietist/Rationalist era at Trinity Church (*Trefoldighetskirken*), where Carl Arnold led the congregation in slow, solemn singing with long, sustained tones augmented by interludes improvised on the organ between the stanzas. In 1873, however, Otto Winter-Hjelm succeeded Arnold as chief musician and immediately introduced the rhythmic chorales. At the Garrison Church (*Garnisonskirken*) Erik Hoff, an enthusiastic proponent of the new music, presented the congregation with religious folksongs and Danish hymn tunes in the Romantic tradition. Meanwhile Lindeman maintained the churchly tradition of "strict composition" mingled with a moderate amount of renewal at the primary congregation of the city, Our Savior's (*Vor Frelzers*). Lindeman's musical influence at Our Savior's did not remain untouched after his death, however.

Now [1918] is quickly the time to lead the fresh stream [of folk melodies] into our church music. A pair of folk tunes is already being used, more should be attempted.... Many can recall the remarkable effect it had the first time they heard the folk tune *I himmelen, i himmelen*<sup>23</sup> in Our Savior's Church in Christiania. One expressed it thus: 'It was as though I was lifted up with it.' The melody has a particularly sunny feeling. The singer glimpses light rays through golden wings in flight under high, white-blue heavens.

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<sup>22</sup> Sandvik, *Norsk Kirekmusik og dens Kilder*, p. 70.

<sup>23</sup> A folk tune from the Heddal region of Norway for the hymn "In Heaven Above": this hymn remains popular in Lutheran congregations in the United States which have Norwegian roots.



It is at once visionary and at the same time real. This delightful tune is as attractive as the text itself.<sup>24</sup>

This contentious fermentation among church musicians in Norway traveled with the various immigrant groups which departed, beginning in 1825, for the New World. Generally speaking, those Lutheran immigrants who favored the use of the rhythmic chorales were also the most outspoken in their faithfulness toward the Lutheran Confessions. These Norwegian Lutherans formed together in the church body called *Den norsk-evangelisk-lutheriske Kirke i Amerika* (the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or more briefly, the Norwegian Synod). The immigrants who left Norway because of opposition to the Church of Norway (in general followers of the lay preacher, Hans Nielsen Hauge) tended to retain the older songs of the Pietist movement in Norway.

One of the founders of the Norwegian Synod, Ulrich V. Koren, was a close friend of Johann Behrens, the early advocate for the rhythmic chorales back in Norway. Consequently, Koren and other like-minded Lutheran immigrant leaders pushed for the use of rhythmic chorales in the worship life of the Norwegian Synod. While various collections of hymns were issued and used, it was not until 1904 when the Synod published its *Rhythmisk Koralbog* that the full acceptance of the rhythmic chorales had been attained.

In the days when the Lutheran church received the name 'the singing church,' it was the rhythmic form of the chorales that was used, and it was the congregation that sang...It will perhaps be said in many places that the melodies in this form are unsingable because they are so difficult that the congregations cannot learn them. But what has been done elsewhere, e.g., in Germany, Denmark, and America, can

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<sup>24</sup> Sandvik, *Norsk Kirkemusik*, p. 74. Sandvik's romantic language notwithstanding, the folk song hymns do provide a welcomed balance in Nordic hymn collections to the strict style of the German influence.



certainly be done also among us, provided one does not begin with a negative attitude and preconceived idea that ‘it just won’t work.’<sup>25</sup>

The controversy between Behrens and Lindeman in Norway spilled over into the Norwegian Synod in the America as well. Koren’s daughter, Marie, an accomplished organist, reminisced that “we used the chorale books of Jensen and Laub and Hoelter, but never Lindeman.”<sup>26</sup> Lindeman’s reputation among these Lutheran immigrants was also tarnished because he set so many of the hymn texts of N. F. S. Grundtvig, whose theology was opposed by the theologians of the Norwegian Synod.<sup>27</sup> It would be some time before Lindeman/Grundtvig hymns, such as *Kirken den er et gammelt hus*, gained acceptance in the Synod.

At the same time, another leading member in the Norwegian Synod, Erik Jensen, favored the mediating position of Lindeman’s approach to the old chorales. Echoing the criticisms in the debates back in Norway, Jensen explains in his foreword why the Lindeman solution is preferred to the continued advocacy for the rhythmic chorales.

In only a few instances have I ventured further than Lindeman in adopting the old rhythmic form of the chorale. A congregation is, and always will be, unmusical on the whole. For this reason it would have difficulty singing the syncopations and alternating duple and triple rhythms found in so many of our old church hymns. These rhythmically alternating hymns, so highly praised by some, were probably not originally as full of life and beauty as some people maintain. The original rhythmic forms should be used for a congregation only when the rhythm is even and in general natural and easy for the congregation to learn. Otherwise, the chorales in their original rhythm should be regarded as art music.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Marie Koren, “Forbemerkninger”. *Rhytmisk Koralbog* (Decorah, Iowa: Lutheran Publishing House, 1904), p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Carl F. Schalk, *Source Documents in American Lutheran Hymnody* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996), p. 113, n2.

<sup>27</sup> These theologians were suspicious of Grundtvig’s theology because the Dane had placed such a strong emphasis on the Apostles Creed. To them Grundtvig granted the Creed an authority greater than that of the Bible.

<sup>28</sup> Schalk, *Source Documents*, p. 106.



That the rhythmic chorales were “art music” best left to the choirs was the primary argument that Lindeman himself had advanced in the debates back in Norway.

The German Lutheran immigrants were also embroiled in this debate, both among themselves and in contacts with the Norwegians. The earlier German Lutheran immigrants who had settled in the colonies before the Revolutionary War had been closely allied with the Halle Pietists. Their hymns and congregational singing reflected the sentiments of Pietism.

Singing in the church, or on other occasions of worship, has as its purposes to elicit or promote devotion and to promote in the soul a solemn mood, so that it may be more receptive for celestial impressions and heavenly perceptions. It naturally follows that such a song must itself be devotional and solemn, that is, it must be executed slowly and with moderate voices, never with frivolous haste and unpleasant noise.... The more simply a chorale is sung, the more beautiful it sounds.<sup>29</sup>

With the influx of Saxons, Prussians and Pomeranians after the Prussian Union edict of the king, Frederick William III, uniting Reformed and Lutheran congregations, a strong Lutheran Confessionalism kindled an interest in the rhythmic chorales among the German Lutheran congregations in the American Midwest. By personal acquaintance and by the study of the writings of the various rhythmic chorale advocates in Germany—Tucher, Schöberlein, Layriz and others—the Saxon Lutherans who would form what is now called The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod pushed for the use of the rhythmic chorales. The debates among the German immigrants were as heated as among the Norwegians.

A new note was being sounded, however, in the debates among the immigrant groups. While it was implied in the European debates that a return to the

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<sup>29</sup> “Remarks Concerning Fine Chorale Singing. Chiefly in Public Worship,” Philadelphia, 1813; quoted in Schalk, *Source Documents*, pp. 22-23.



rhythmic chorales was a return to the same faithfulness as that confessed in Augsburg, 1530, the joining of theology and music was not explicitly discussed. The debates primarily centered on the appropriate style for congregational singing. Among the German “Old Lutherans” who immigrated to the United States in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as among similarly minded immigrant Lutherans of the Norwegian Synod, the use of the rhythmic chorales became the sign of Lutheran confessional integrity.

Is perhaps the introduction of rhythmic chorales an unnecessary change from the good old practices? It is true that where rhythmic chorales are once again introduced it constitutes a change; what is more, it constitutes a change in the old practices. But *good* old practices? Can something be good which comes from a bad source? If we would have good old practices, we must take them from the best time of the church’s life, not from the times of decay and corruption. As with the text—where we want not simply what is old but rather the original and uncorrupted—so with the music [*wie im Text der Lieder, so auch in den Weisen*]. Accordingly, we shall not find it difficult to decide to make a change. This change is from inferior to something better, and no one should be too old for that!<sup>30</sup>

It will fall to the later generations of church musicians in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to think more deeply about the interaction between theological integrity and the integrity of the historical forms of church music and hymns; that the singing of Martin Luther’s theology was not simply a matter of the texts he wrote but also a matter concerning the melodies with which he and others set those texts.

#### *U. L. Ullman—Signs of a Rebirth of the Lutheran Aesthetic*

The robust spirit of renewal among the Lutherans in Germany was carried into Sweden by Uddo Lechard Ullman (1837-1930), whose own voice was added to the crescendo of voices leading to the great rebirth in Lutheran worship life in the

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<sup>30</sup> Pastor Gustav Schaller in an editorial in the Synod’s publication, *Der Lutheraner*, IX (May 10, 1853): 124; quoted in Schalk, *The Roots of Hymnody*, p. 30.



early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ullman's work, though largely unknown among English-speaking Lutherans, had a powerful influence in Sweden.

While the Lutheran Church in Denmark and Norway had been shaped by the *Deutsche Messe* tradition of Martin Luther, with its hymn-based liturgical forms, the Church in Sweden had followed Luther's first reform effort, the *Formula Missae*, with its greater retention of the historic liturgy and use of plainsong, intermingled with newly composed chorales. Consequently the *Deutsche Messe* tradition among the Nordic Churches rose and fell over time with the quality of the hymn texts and tunes, while in Sweden there was a greater constancy for the worshipers.

With this continuity in Sweden, the effects of the liturgical renewal coming out of Germany were more practical in nature among the Swedish Lutherans. The various debates among the clergy centered on the details of the liturgy and their theological understanding, rather than on the restoration of a lost liturgical practice. These debates in Sweden were carried on between the twin poles of a low-church perspective in Uppsala and the high-church perspective in Lund.

Emerging from within this debate U. L. Ullman became a clear and guiding voice in the Church of Sweden. He had been formed by his theological studies in Germany and by his contacts with Kliefoth and Löhe. From them Ullman brought to the Swedish debates a theological foundation that fixed the liturgy's essence as a polarity between God's gifts to humanity and humanity's gifts to God. In thorough Lutheran fashion, begun with Luther himself, Ullman stressed the *simul* (simultaneity) of divinity and humanity, of the external and the internal, the sacramental and the sacrificial. According to the personal union of the divine and human in Christ, these contrasts, opposites, remain united as one without confusion. It is within the Divine Service that the *communicatio idiomatum* is known.



Ullman's great contribution in this lively renewal movement came in regard to the role of art, especially music, in the liturgical simultaneity of these various poles. Between 1874 and 1885, while a lecturer in theology and philosophy at Göteborg, he wrote the two volumes of *Evangelisk-luthersk liturgik med särskild hänsyn till den svenska kyrkans förhållanden*. This was the first and, until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only theological work which thoroughly grounded the Lutheran liturgy in the confession of the faith. What the brothers, Olaus Petri and Laurentius Petri, had first brought to the Swedish Church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation, Ullman brought to theological fullness and clarity of expression.

This fullness is due in part because Ullman's *Liturgik* includes the role of the arts. He securely planted art within the polarity between *sacramentum* and *sacrificium*.<sup>31</sup> Unlike the fine art *Empfindsamkeit* of the previous era, Ullman's appreciation of the art of music is in union with the divine revelation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In a small tract, *Om Förhållandet emellan Kristendom och Konst: särskildt med afseende på den kristliga kulten* ("On the Relationship between Christianity and Art: with Particular Reference to the Christian Cult") of 1878, Ullman publicly asked the question:

Can one truly say that Christianity and Art stand in some relationship with each other? That they might find some sort of inner bond between them seems to be a conclusion already settled. From time immemorial religion and art have gone hand in hand through the course of history so that religion gave to art an awakening, substance and a mission, and that ideal of beauty which art would show forth. Art has stood in dependence on and has been determined by the varying manner in which the religion of the people has comprehended the meaning of religion's life among the people. And yet we lack no reason not to ask: Can one really speak about some

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<sup>31</sup> "Both [*sacramentum* and *sacrificium*] in common with each other comprise a continuous inhaling and exhaling, a perpetual taking and giving; they form in the congregation's life a continual process of respiration." U. L. Ullman, *Evangelisk-luthersk liturgik med särskild hänsyn till den svenska kyrkans förhållanden*, Vol. I (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerups Förlag, 1885), pp. 32-33.



inner relationship between religion, today especially Christianity or the Christian Church, and the fine arts?<sup>32</sup>

This is what immediately ought to be noticed: *Christianity and art in their own ways have a certain affinity with each other and, therefore, can enter into union* [*ingåförening*; italics in the original]. One needs neither a peculiar aesthetic study of art nor systematic theology's erudition. One needs only a common sense understanding about two domains in human life which are now at issue, namely Christianity and Art, for knowing that either of them, one as the other, aims to permit a precious content belonging to the spiritual world to be formed in matter which belongs to the natural and physical world.<sup>33</sup>

His conclusive answer to this is bold: "Art needs Christianity and Christianity needs Art."<sup>34</sup>

Ullman's use of the term "need" (*behöfver*) should not be taken lightly. For a Lutheran theologian to speak of "necessity" is not hyperbole. The use of this term goes to the very nature of the faith. Ullman boldly, yet theologically, outlines this necessity.

As for the first necessity, "Art needs Christianity," Ullman's answer is brief. "We will be able easily to convince ourselves of the truth of [this] first portion of this assertion."<sup>35</sup> Ullman addresses the impact of the ancient Greek ideal of the Beautiful on Christian artistic endeavors. Christianity's influence on Art, he suggests, can be seen in the outer forms of beauty in Art. (He also recognizes the Christian influence in literature: Shakespeare's historical dramas, Goethe's *Faust* and Ibsen's *Kaiser og Galilæer*.)

It is, however, in Christianity's need of Art that Ullman's deeper thought is captured.

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<sup>32</sup> U. L. Ullman. *Om Förhållandet emellan Kristendom och Konst* (Göteborg: D. F. Bonniers Boktryckeri, 1878), p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Ullman. *Kristendom och Konst*, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*



It is clear that such an alliance between art and cult can be realized only with certain assumptions. Art must, namely, give up every claim to be and signify anything in and for itself. Nothing gets into the Divine Service in advance except that it is beautiful, or to prepare an aesthetic, artistic pleasure for those present.... Art can do nothing to give in to these terms without denying and losing its way. So the alliance would seem impossible. Yet that Art can do so, that it becomes a genuinely churchly Art, can be seen from Art's history, also no less than the Church's.... There is an inner depth relationship between Christianity and Art.<sup>36</sup>

As Art brings something good and pleasing to the worshiping congregation, it is *sacramentum*. The pleasing good is not merely an aesthetic pleasing good, because in the Divine Service Art is more than mere Art. Furthermore, as Art brings something good and pleasing to expression in the liturgy it is *sacrificium*, the pleasing good is more than outward form.

In the meeting between *sacramentum* and *sacrificium*, which is the liturgy's innermost being, *sacramentum* represents all that which God does, the objective grace independent of us ourselves, and *sacrificium* is all that which the congregation bears to Him. Both of these have their unity in Christ. He is the eternal *sacramentum*, God's great Gift to humanity. Through His work of salvation He offers an eternally effective *sacrificium*. The liturgy is in its essence a dialog and a reciprocal action [*växelsviken*]... The Divine Service is the meeting between both of these poles [as Ullman writes], "between the Lord and His people. The Lord draws near His congregation in the Word and Sacraments and blesses them with life and light from the sanctuary above. The congregation for its part meets the Lord, and in a completely whole, restored faith receives His gifts of grace together with offering Him their hearts in prayer, thanks and praise." This is the meeting between *sacramentum* and *sacrificium* which the liturgy feeds.<sup>37</sup>

The musician shares in the Priestly Office of Christ who reconciles God and humanity, heaven and earth. As the musicians Praetorius (see pages 70-71) and Schütz (see pages 99-102) embodied in their Office, the theologian Ullman recognizes: the Incarnate Word and music communicate their attributes

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<sup>36</sup> Ullman, *Kristendom och Konst*, p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> Carl Henrik Martling, *Svensk Liturgi Historia* (Stockholm: Verbum Förlag, 1992), p. 120.



(*communicatio idiomatum*): Christ's divinity shares in and with the Office of musician and music (*genus tapeinotikon*), while the human Office of music and musician shares in Christ (*genus maiestaticum*). This is the Christological aesthetic.

Ullman illustrates his point by comparing the role of Art in the Lutheran Church with its role in two other Christian traditions: the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church. He faults the Roman Catholic Church, because while it highly values the arts, the arts remain purely outer adornments. "Here Art is not only a beautiful vessel for the contents of the Divine Service, but it has an independent significance. The sanctuary has become an art museum."<sup>38</sup> For Ullman, however, Art does not have an "independent significance"; its significance is in union with the liturgy. On the other hand, he also faults the Reformed Church. Although it places high a value on the living voice of the Gospel, yet, he claims, it rejects the earthly forms which embody that Gospel. "Under [the Reformed Church, the Gospel] leads to an unhealthy manner of increased emotional life; the Reformed Church in its cult is almost inclined to speak the incomprehensible. This cult therefore gives a prosaic soberness, an abstract and cold character...when one, first and last, has placed weight on the spoken Word."<sup>39</sup> It is a "spoken Word" without at the same time being united with the form of the speaker.<sup>40</sup>

Contrary to the Roman Catholic embrace of art for beauty's sake and the Reformed avoidance of Art, in the Lutheran Church it is the purpose of

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<sup>38</sup> Ullman, *Kristendom och Konst*, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Ullman's criticism of the Reformed disembodied Word is reminiscent of Luther's criticism of Augustine's distinction between the outer sign (*signum*) and inner substance (*res*). Luther criticized such a distinction because it allowed for a separation of the two which are always as one. The Gospel is concerned for union, not separation. Luther said at table. "At first I devoured, not merely read, Augustine. But when the door was opened for me in Paul, so that I understood what justification by faith is, it was all over with Augustine." "Table Talk", *Luther's Works, Vol. 54* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 49



representation (*framställning*)<sup>41</sup> in which Ullman particularly recognizes the need Christianity has for Art, especially music, in its liturgical life. As Praetorius outlined in his *Syntagma Musicum* regarding the ancient Greek ideal of beauty, art's usefulness and necessity is as the expressive form of the living Word, the Christ who comes to humanity and is seen and heard in union with Art. Art, including music, is not the means for humanity to discover and apprehend the divine apart from the Word. (See pages 63-65)

Between these twin prejudices [the Roman Catholic and the Reformed] in reference to Art's liturgical application, as also on the whole, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church maintains its place as the sound, golden Church in the middle. Likewise because she stresses in her cult the Word and Sacrament and desires that they be received and offered in the worshiping congregation, she takes profit in the question concerning the form of the cult and its comprehensive regard for the human need and desire to grasp the spirit-body whole and in a harmonized manner. She sees, on the one hand, that it is a going astray of one kind when one holds aesthetic enjoyment—were it even a matter of the enjoyment of Christian art—to be the same as devotion. On the other hand, she sees profit...when one looks down on intentional carelessness toward and with the outer form of the holy contents.... She knows that the spiritual content and the outer significant form are indissolubly united in the human world, and, accordingly, where one represents [*framställer*] the holy in the careless, everyday and plain [*oskön*] form, the holy itself easily enough will come to be seen as something commonplace and plain [*oskönt*], as works unattractive and repulsive. True to this principle the Lutheran Church has since the beginning profited by placing herself in friendly circumstances toward Art and has, with neither ostentation and exaggeration nor anxious suspicion, made use of it in her celebrations of the Divine Service.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ullman's use of the term *framställning* ("representation") is not to be understood as a mere symbol or sign, but as a "significant sign". What is represented is present in the representation.

<sup>42</sup> Ullman, *Kristendom och Konst*, p. 17. Echoing the thought of earlier Lutheran theologians and musicians concerning the *accent* and *concent* in music embodying the *harmonia* of the justified sinner in Christ. Ullman wrote in his *Liturgik*, "Church hymns are also lyric poetry. At the same time they must be beautiful.... But what does it mean that churchly hymns are beautiful? ... The [hymn's] own inner harmony, together with its poetic representational attire [*framställningens dräkt*] which is its outer harmony, is therefore beautiful. The hymn's whole tone with inner necessity [*nödvändighet*] thus becomes noble, elevated, full of holy pleasure, and is distanced from all that is commonplace, flat, base and dissonant.... The object or ideal reality, which is in the Christian cult on the whole and, consequently, also present in church hymns, will give itself concrete expression. For the believing congregation's devotional and serene fellowship with God in Christ Jesus is in itself the highest.



In Ullman's earlier thought, which he later revised, he carried the theme of "representation" (*framställning*) to the role of the choir in the liturgy. While a docent at Uppsala (1869-1872) Ullman outlined his thoughts in a lecture. The choir's role in liturgy, indeed from its location in the gallery, is as a representation of the heavenly Church which stands above time and space. The choir at one and the same time stands with the priest and assembled congregation in the singing of the liturgy and yet stands apart from them as an "ideal." These thoughts were inspired in Ullman by his contact with the German church musician Ludwig Schöberlein, who wrote:

Much more, the significance of the choir is to expand and be stretched out above the church itself, above the church as the Body of the Lord in general, as the *ideal* congregation; or in more tangible form, to be stretched out above the *universal church* [*allgemeine Kirche*] enclosing the earthly as well as the heavenly congregation, and no less going back into the time of the Old Covenant as including the present time and also the foreseeable expectation of the culmination of all things. By this the choir understands that in itself, always according to liturgical position and according to the liturgical elements—sometimes more the one, sometimes more the other, the universal church sounds throughout the singing of the choir.<sup>43</sup>

Since the choir was the "ideal" representation of the universal church, the choir must, therefore, sing "ideal" music. For Ullman, as it was for many church musicians of that period, this ideal music included the works of Roman Catholic composers such as Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Pergolesi and Allegri as well as Lutheran composers such as Praetorius, Eccard, Hassler and Crüger (Schütz was considered too operatic in his compositional style).

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noblest and most harmonious blend of all the realities of human life. *Liturgik, Vol. II, förste häfte*, p. 155.

<sup>43</sup> Schöberlein, quoted in Oloph Bexell, *Liturgins Teologi hos U. L. Ullman* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987), p. 261, n7.



The whole [music composed by those named above] is so marvelously transparent and at the same time so unfathomably intertwined with its many voices, that we are lifted up by their tonal ventures of holy harmony toward eternity's world, in the same way as when we contemplate the heavenward reach of the columns and vaults of the gothic cathedral.<sup>44</sup>

To the works of these admired early composers, Ullman also added the works of Bach and Handel whose music, “in listening to it, is so beautiful and vast, as anyone has brought forth by human musical art.”<sup>45</sup>

While Ullman is rhapsodic about music, an organic whole in itself, he also insists that it is only part of the greater whole of the organic cohesiveness [*sammenhang*] in the Divine Service. In sentiment, though not in so many words, Ullman's perception of the place and role of music (and Art in general) reflects Martin Luther's dictum concerning the freedom of the Christian. Paraphrasing Luther's famous couplet, Ullman seems to say “[Music] is a perfectly free lord, subject to none; [Music] is a perfectly dutiful servant, subject to all.” While music “represents” (*framställa*) the life of faith—that is, music “makes present” the life of faith—music is at the same time subordinate to the overarching “representation” (*framställning*) of the liturgy—that is, music is simultaneously set within the grace of God “made present” in the liturgy of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments.<sup>46</sup>

In his *Litiurgik*, Ullman moved away from setting the choir in a uniquely independent role both within and yet over against the assembly. After further consideration Ullman came to understand the choir's representative role as being within the congregation's *sacrificium* to God. Now he placed the choir as the

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<sup>44</sup> Ullman, quoted in Bexell. *Liturgins Teologi*, p. 261.

<sup>45</sup> Bexell. *Liturgins Teologi*. p. 261.

<sup>46</sup> See p. 177. n42.



musically gifted voice of the entire congregation, giving form and expression (*framställning*) to the inner life of the worshiping assembly. Echoing Schleiermacher's understanding of the choir as "the artistic elite of the congregation," Ullman insisted that "the choir will not take the place of the congregation's singing, but rather lead it."<sup>47</sup>

These insights and theologically grounded principles concerning music in the life of the worshiping congregation led to Ullman's involvement in the discussions over the hymns of the Swedish Church. Ullman had already expressed himself in his *Liturgik* on the subject of hymns. The liturgy has a need, he wrote, for

a congregational song of fresh character, of great liveliness and strength. However when these are drawn out [in the slow tempo of the period] the tunes possess a drowsiness...which one not infrequently still must hear in our public Divine Services.<sup>48</sup>

The "drowsiness" he mentions came from the 1808 hymn collection issued by J. C. F. Haeffner. All of the hymns in that collection were written in the even-note rhythm of the time and, therefore, included none of the rhythmic settings of the older Reformation chorales.

The controversy over rhythmic or isorhythmic settings for the chorales which raged in Norway at this time was also known in Sweden. Ullman favored the rhythmic settings. In the foreword to a collection of hymns which he edited in 1890, Ullman noted that the rhythmic chorale singing "would not degenerate into a sort of popular song or dance which would awaken aversion in the congregation."<sup>49</sup> On the contrary, Ullman noted, singing in the rhythmic settings would allow the

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<sup>47</sup> Ullman, quoted in Bexell, *Liturgins Teologi*, p. 263.

<sup>48</sup> Ullman, quoted in Carl Allan Moberg, *Kyrkomusikens Historia* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1932), p. 469.

<sup>49</sup> Moberg, *Kyrkomusikens Historia*, p. 504.



congregation to sing a truer song. This 1890 hymnal was closer in spirit to *Koralpsalmboken* of 1697 which Ullman praised for its Nordic character and genuineness of which “Haeffner in his chorale book [had] almost entirely deprived us.”<sup>50</sup>



Figure 4 The chorale setting of *We All Believe in One True God*, Martin Luther's *Credo* chorale from his *Deutsche Messe* in a setting by J. C. F. Haeffner. Notice the simple harmonizations and isorhythmic meter. The original meter of the German chorale is shown on the next page, Fig. 5.

Ullman, the most Christologically focused among the Swedish theologians and musicians of this time, had no difficulty being convinced of the mutual necessity of Christianity and Art. Because of his long life and the persuasiveness of his writings Ullman had a powerful effect on theologians and church musicians of the Church of Sweden in both the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Above all this is certainly a question about the spiritual genre of poetry and music, that they have been granted a particular place, taken up and cared for in the Lutheran Church's cult. The return within this Church, thus, has reached a high level of perfection. Not without reason has it been called 'the singing' [Church]. A tremendously rich store of church hymns—one reckons the number to

<sup>50</sup> Edwin Liemohn, *The Chorale Through Four Hundred Years* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953), p. 116. Ullman noted in his *Liturgik*, "It is precisely these [Reformation era chorale] melodies' rhythmic vitality which extends to them a singular folkliness, freshness, beauty and strength." *Liturgik*, Vol. II, första häfte, p. 187.



80,000—has emerged out of her management. In the midst of this store is found a great many songs, both great and small, in which the poetic and musical elements are marked by natural power, freshness and genuine popularity, no less than by deep warmth and true edification. By this point of view they belong to the highest place to which Christian poetry and music ever have been brought. But also apart from the chorale music which the Evangelical Lutheran Church has used in the Divine Service in abundant measure from her first, youthful days, the so-called altar singing together with choral or figural singing also convinces us [of the high place of music in the Church], as one looks over the earlier Lutheran church and mass orders... From our church's earlier days we have once again preserved the richest treasures of classical churchly poetry and music.<sup>51</sup>



Figure 5 The original rhythmic, plainsong-inspired melody of Luther's Credo hymn.

### *Mendelssohn and Brahms—The Lutheran Aesthetic Among the Romantics*

In making a comparison between the music of Felix Mendelssohn and Johannes Brahms, the *bon mot* that the former composed a German Te Deum

<sup>51</sup> Ullman, *Kristendom och Konst*, p. 17.



(*Lobgesang*, op. 52) while the latter composed a German Requiem (*Ein Deutsches Requiem*, op. 45) is at once telling and yet deceptive. It is true that Mendelssohn, the enlightened Romantic, composed music that took continual strides toward the ideals of perfection while Brahms, the post-Romantic, composed music with a deep sense of *Weltschmerz*. Nevertheless, for all of Mendelssohn's idealism he did not lapse into the "theology of glory" which Lutheran theologians regularly condemn; nor for all of his *Sehnsucht* is Brahms a nihilist. Both composers, each in their own creative ways, present a profound "theology of the cross", a hidden glory, in their compositions. This can be heard in their large choral works with orchestra, as well as in their smaller compositions of church music and songs.

Following in the long, rich Lutheran musical heritage, epitomized in the passions and oratorios of Bach, Mendelssohn incorporated chorale tunes into his major sacred choral works. His *Lobgesang*, composed in 1840 for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invention of moveable type printing, and his earlier work, *St. Paul*, first performed in Düsseldorf in May of 1836, employ a liberal number of chorale movements. That Mendelssohn had staged the performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829 to much critical acclaim certainly added to his desire to emulate the great Leipzig Kantor.

While many critics dismissed Mendelssohn's echo of Bach as a slavish imitation of the master, Mendelssohn himself recognized that what he owed to Bach was a discovery of the deeper stream from which Bach and he drank.

That I have just now written a number of sacred works was an inner necessity for me, just as one feels sometimes driven to read a specific book, the Bible or something else, which is the only to make oneself feel good. If it shows similarities to Seb. Bach, I once more cannot help it, since I wrote it according to my mood, and if I felt just like the old Bach when reading the words, so much the better for me.



Because you will not think that I copy his forms, without content; if so, I could not finish a single piece due to disgust and emptiness.<sup>52</sup>

It is the same desire as Bach's, to express in musical terms the affections, whether spiritual or secular, which arise from within the composer's creative gifts.

Mendelssohn was particularly influenced along these lines by the theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher. In his dogmatics text, *The Christian Faith*, Schleiermacher outlines how an awareness of absolute dependence on God involves, simultaneously, poetic and rhetorical expressions.

The poetic expression is always based originally upon a moment of exaltation which has come purely from within, a moment of enthusiasm or inspiration; the rhetorical upon a moment whose exaltation has come from without, a moment of stimulated interest which issues in a particular result. The former is purely descriptive (*darstellend*), and sets up in general outlines images and forms which each hearer completes for himself in his own peculiar way. The rhetorical, is purely stimulative, and has, in its nature, to do for the most part with such elements of speech as, admitting of degrees of signification, can be taken in a wider or narrower sense, content if at the decisive moment they can accomplish the highest, even though they should exhaust themselves thereby and subsequently appear to lose somewhat of their force.<sup>53</sup>

This combination of the stimulative and the expressive, of the rhetorical and the poetic, as a simultaneity is more helpful in assessing the Mendelssohn's creative works than a purely musical assessment would provide.

It will certainly occur more frequently when a soul in fellowship with Christ has already attained a very marked facility in the development of the God-consciousness; and will occur very little in one whom the sensuous impulse sways so quickly from moment to moment that such a development can rarely follow.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> A letter from Mendelssohn to Eduard Devrient, July 13, 1821. quoted in, Georg Feder, "On Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's Sacred Music," *The Mendelssohn Companion*, ed. Douglass Seaton (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001). p.263. The French composer, Hector Berlioz, was dismissive of Mendelssohn's piety: "Il croit fermement à sa religion luthérienne, et je scandalais quelquefois beaucoup en riant de la Bible." ["He believes firmly in his Lutheran religion. and I scandalized him, sometimes much, while laughing at the Bible."] Berlioz's disdain is, nevertheless, a testimony to the intimate connection between music and the faith for Mendelssohn.

<sup>53</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976). pp. 78-79

<sup>54</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*. pp. 139-140.



Schleiermacher synthesizes within the individualism of Romanticism that which had been sundered by Rationalism, namely the external Word and inner human experience (experience by reason and feeling). In this way Mendelssohn is also a Romantic, yet not entirely so. His Lutheranism is akin to Bach's.

Mendelssohn's great oratorio, *Elijah*, expresses these theological insights most clearly. For having been moved by the rhetoric of the past—the music of Bach and Handel—Mendelssohn gives expression to what is in him by contemporary, forward-looking compositional styles; as Mendelssohn's father noted, “uniting old tastes with new means.”<sup>55</sup> While Berlioz was dismissive of his “being a little too fond of the dead,” Mendelssohn's uniting of the rhetoric of the past with a poetic expression of the present was, in fact, something new.

In *Elijah* the chorale-based compositional language with fugal writing becomes implicitly stated rather than the explicit musical statements found in *St. Paul*. While some critics dismiss *Elijah* as a collection of contradictions in style, neither old nor new, others recognize that there is a wholeness beyond the apparent contradictions.

...the more that the ‘dramatic’ action reached its conclusion, the more that the need to demonstrate its exemplary significance becomes essential.... All these movements thus indicate that the story of *Elijah* does not tell of the distant past but has a hortatory meaning for the present-day listener—whether understood as one of a public audience or as a member of a congregation.<sup>56</sup>

It is this element of Schleiermachian simultaneity that frustrated those Romantics inclined to spectacle, as well as frustrating those conservative church musicians who were still occupied with the debates about “churchly style” in music.

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<sup>55</sup> *The Mendelssohn Companion*, p. 379, n29.

<sup>56</sup> Friedhelm Krummacher, “Art–History–Religion: On Mendelssohn's Oratorios *St. Paul* and *Elijah*,” *The Mendelssohn Companion*, pp. 329–330.



The climax of the scene on Mt. Carmel in *Elijah*, when fire descends from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice and the prophet subsequently calls for the slaying of the false prophets of Baal, is wholly understated in its dramatic impact (according to the sensibilities of some Romantics). Yet, at the same time, the Christological allusions in the scene are far too subtly portrayed for the tastes of



Figure 6 Pictured above is the chorale, *O Gott, du frommer Gott*, which Mendelssohn adapts for the quartet (Fig. 7, next page) *Cast Thy Burdens Upon the Lord*. By using the chorale, its text becomes an implied interpretation of the quartet.

those church musicians who prefer more obvious references. The quartet, “Cast thy burdens upon the Lord,” is written in a cantionale style but it also employs the tune of the chorale *O Gott, du frommer Gott* in a highly modified adaptation. One stanza of that chorale reads:

4. If dangers gather round,  
     Still keep me calm and fearless;  
 Help me to bear the cross  
     When life is dark and cheerless;  
 And let me win my foe  
     With words and actions kind,  
 When counsel I would know,  
     Good counsel let me find.<sup>57</sup>

Mendelssohn preaches the Christian's strength of faith which comes by bearing the cross with Jesus Christ.

<sup>57</sup> *O Gott, du frommer Gott*; text by Johann Heermann, 1630; trans. Catherine Winkworth.



This sort of subtle blending of the implicit and the explicit in Mendelssohn, so reminiscent of Bach's creative subtlety and yet so new with Mendelssohn's treatment, frustrates a purely musical judgment of this work. Rather it is as Schleiermacher expressed it,

The syntheses [of rhetorical and poetic preaching, together with Christian doctrine] are, then, in part, of the kind which by preference are occasional, immediately serving the purpose of directly communicating the religious consciousness, and claiming only ecclesiastical value for the propositions in question, as doctrine which belongs to the realm of preaching and edification.<sup>58</sup>

The musical score is for a chorale-like setting of the hymn "Cast Thy Burdens Upon the Lord". It is written for four solo voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and Piano. The tempo is marked "Più adagio" with a metronome marking of 52. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The lyrics are: "Cast thy bur - den up - on the Lord; and He shall sus - / Wirf dein An - lie - gen auf den Herrn, der wird dich ver -". The piano part features a simple harmonic accompaniment with a rising melodic line in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

Figure 7 The chorale-like "Cast Thy Burdens Upon the Lord"

If Mendelssohn had to face the musical critics who dismissed his work as sentimental, genteel, "kid-glove" compositions, he was doubly troubled by the challenges he faced from church musicians. In 1842 he was appointed by King Frederick William IV of Prussia to be *Generalmusikdirector* of the *Berlinerdom*. It

<sup>58</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, pp. 87-88.



was an appointment Mendelssohn resisted because the Calvinist inclinations of the ruling Hohenzollern family had stripped the Divine Service of much of its music.

Real church music, that is, for the evangelical Divine Service, which could have its place within the ecclesiastical ceremony, seems to me impossible, not merely because I am not at all able to see where music is to be introduced during the service, but because I am unable to conceive of this place.... As yet—even forgetting the Prussian liturgy, which cuts off everything of the kind and will probably not be permanent or far-reaching—I have been unable to understand how for us music may be made to become an integrated part of the service and not merely a concert which, to a more or less degree, stimulates piety.<sup>59</sup>

The fashionable taste in church music at that time was the *a cappella* style of Palestrina. This prevailing fashion in Germany, together with an impressionable visit by Frederick William IV to England and his hearing of the psalm singing of the choirs in the Anglican Church at Matins and Evensong, moved the king to adopt that style of psalm singing for the services of his court chapel and the cathedral in Berlin. Mendelssohn, however, preferred to work with instrumental music or choral music accompanied by instruments.

The king...wants to hear good, genuine choral music in the cathedral. This means Gregorian music, with compositions in both the old and new church styles. Mendelssohn does not know where to begin...<sup>60</sup>

The hesitant composer dutifully composed settings of Psalm 2 (*Fig. 8*, next page) and Psalm 98 for the cathedral services of the 1843 Christmas season, followed in Lent with settings of Psalm 43 and Psalm 22. Mendelssohn immediately

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<sup>59</sup> Mendelssohn in a letter to Albert Bauer, a Lutheran pastor, January, 1835; quoted in David Brodbeck, "A winter of discontent: Mendelssohn and the *Berliner Domchor*," *Mendelssohn Studies*, ed. R. Larry Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> An entry in the journal of Christian Carl Josias Freiherr von Bunsen (1791-1860), a church musician and sometime diplomat from the Prussian court to Rome and England; quoted in Wolfgang Dinglinger, "Ein Neues Lied," *Mendelssohn Studien*, Bd. 5 (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 1982), p. 102. Von Bunsen's *Versuch eines allgemeinen evangelischen Gesang- und Gebet-buchs*, 1833, was a collection of core hymns for Lutheran usage. Catherine Winkworth's influential translations of German hymns into English, *Lyra Germanica* 1855, was based on von Bunsen's collection and dedicated to him.



*Solo* Küs - set den Sohn, dass er nicht zür - ne, und ihr um - kom - met auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den

*Tutti* Küs - set den Sohn, dass er nicht zür - ne, und ihr um - kom - met auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den

*Solo del Coro 1* dass er nicht zür - ne, Sohn, dass er nicht zür - ne, und ihr um - kommt auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den

*Cresc. 1 e 2 unis (senza Sopr.)* Sohn, denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - nen.

*Solo del Coro 1* Sohn, denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - nen, a - ber wohl al - len die auf ihn trau

*Cresc. 1 e 2 unis (senza Sopr.)* denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - nen.

*Solo del Coro 1* en, a - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en, a - ber

*Cresc. 1 e 2 unis (senza Sopr.)* denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - nen.

*Sopr. e Alto unis* denn sein Zorn wird

*Barita* a - ber

Figure 8 Mendelssohn's setting of Psalm 2 for the *Berlinerdom* choir



met criticism from the clergy because none of his Psalm settings were in the simple, easily comprehended style that Pietism and the Enlightenment had brought to church music. Instead of a declamatory approach Mendelssohn emphasized the musical/dramatic expressions of the Psalms. He also employed instruments to accompany some of the settings. In this he is reminiscent of Heinrich Schütz, whose Psalm settings were exquisite blends of text and musical art. Like Schütz, Mendelssohn also was soundly criticized for his “secular” influences. He was in frequent conflict with the cathedral clergy.

Mendelssohn Bartholdy can admirably subdue every orchestra and knows how to control the most intractable and unruly of musicians, but with the clergy even the son of Jupiter and Alcmene [*i.e.*, Hercules], who...led [with] a club, instead of a conducting baton, would not yet be finished.<sup>61</sup>

The critical clergy could conceive of “meaning” in a Psalm setting only on the basis of the intelligibility of the text. Nevertheless, Mendelssohn also avoided the other extreme, championed by Richard Wagner, in which the text was dissolved in the music.

Through the art of Tone did the Christian Lyric thus first become itself an art: the music of the Church was sung to the words of the abstract dogma; in its effect however, it dissolved those words and ideas they fixed, to the point of their vanishing out of sight; and hence it rendered nothing to the enraptured Feeling save their pure emotional content.... In this sense, having seen the Lyric compelled to resolve the form of words to a shape of tones, we must recognize that Music reveals the inmost essence of the Christian religion with definition unapproached.<sup>62</sup>

Mendelssohn understood “meaning” in the full Schleiermachian sense of cognitive and affective apprehension of God-consciousness through the musical setting. Yet

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<sup>61</sup> From a Berlin newspaper editorial of 1844: quoted in *Mendelssohn Studies*, p. 20.

<sup>62</sup> Richard Wagner, *Religion and Art*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), p. 223. The Gospel is the “Christian Lyric.” Wagner pities Martin Luther who had to “ward off the devil of Much-printing by the Beelzebub of Much-writing, to find in the long run...words, words—and syllables at last, mere letters, but no living faith!” *Ibid.*, p. 127.



he remained thoroughly Lutheran in that the God-consciousness came by means of the Incarnate Word in preaching and the Sacraments.

Mendelssohn found the fixation in Berlin on an idealized past musical style, *i.e.*, Palestrina, to be confining. The composer lamented in a letter to fellow musician, Ferdinand David,

And in the end the great, many-voiced choral music [of the Lutheran Church] has become reduced; it has shriveled up to a piece of music for the prelude of the Divine Service.<sup>63</sup>

Once again reflecting the influence of Schleiermacher in his thinking, Mendelssohn insisted that music in the church should not “be degraded through the aesthetic discrepancies of the congregational singing or by the sermon.”<sup>64</sup> Drawing on the deeper influences of the Lutheran tradition that reached back through Bach to Luther—that music in the church is a *singen und sagen* of the Gospel—Mendelssohn felt that music in the Divine Service must have the function of *hervorragende Reden*, “liturgy advancing discourse.” Mendelssohn’s sister Fanny Mendelssohn, a gifted composer and musician in her own right, recognized the *anfechtungen* under which her brother labored at the *Berlinerdom*.

This art [music as *hervorragende Reden*] one cannot expect music to learn anytime soon.... Felix must also yet hold the sermon, and, yet, one cannot properly demand that of him.<sup>65</sup>

In a fully Lutheran theological sense, music must be truly music of artistic creation while simultaneously having the Word woven “in, with and under” the music. In the end, because the challenges in Berlin were insurmountable,

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<sup>63</sup> Quoted in *Mendelssohn Studien*, p. 104.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*



Mendelssohn's music provided Frederick William with little liturgical help, and the king's liturgy had little Mendelssohnian music.

Despite the criticisms from the clergy and the restrictions made on him by the liturgical reforms of the Calvinist King of Prussia, Mendelssohn's foray into liturgical music prompted Moritz Hauptmann, a church musician, to comment in the 1850s:

Mendelssohn had no one to copy from. He took the Psalm itself, and nothing but the Psalm; he never thought of Bach, Handel, Palestrina, nor anyone else, nor did he adapt it to any particular style; consequently, his music is neither old-fashioned nor new-fangled, it is simply a fine setting of the Psalm. Three thousand years have not made the words sound strange to us, and I think time will not affect the music either.<sup>66</sup>

Such words of support, like the words of criticism, serve to illustrate how low the state of church music had descended in Lutheran Germany. There was little in the life of the Evangelical Church to testify to Martin Luther's lofty praise of music. Mendelssohn's contributions continued to add to the critical mass that would see a rebirth of church music in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As for Mendelssohn himself, Enlightenment rationalism shaped him to be thoughtful and idealistic about his craft as a composer. Yet the Romantic in Mendelssohn could not hold with the ideal of a church music that banned high art from worship.

I like to take music very seriously, and I consider it impermissible to compose anything I do not feel through and through. It is as if I told a lie, for notes have just as specific a meaning as words.<sup>67</sup>

Martin Luther could not have said it any better.

Now if, as the esteemed musicologist Alfred Einstein suggests, the Romantic Era in music is marked by sustained opposites,<sup>68</sup> then the classical Romanticism of

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<sup>66</sup> *Mendelssohn Studies*, p. 32.

<sup>67</sup> Mendelssohn, in a letter to Frau von Pereira, July, 1831; quoted in *The Mendelssohn Companion*, p. 273, n7.



the idealistic Mendelssohn is firmly matched by the similarly classically influenced Romanticism of the melancholic Johannes Brahms. Unlike the idealism in Mendelssohn's music, Brahms's music (which some have called "old man's music") is imbued with a sense of longing and resignation through and through. It is this sense that gives to Brahms's music its penultimate flavor.



Figure 9 A cartoon from the satirical newspaper, *Figaro*. The caption reads "Eduard Hanslick burns incense to the statue of the holy Johannes Brahms."<sup>69</sup>

In 1853, Brahms's friend and mentor, Robert Schumann, wrote a remarkable essay called "New Paths" (*Neue Bahnen*) to introduce Brahms to the musical world. Schumann's language is startling.

<sup>68</sup> See Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, pp. 3-9.

<sup>69</sup> Like Schumann, Hanslick could also speak in near-messianic language of his admiration for Brahms and his music.



I thought...at some point there would and must appear one who would be called on to give the highest expression to the age in an ideal manner, one who would not unfold his mastery to us gradually, but rather, like Minerva, would spring fully armed from the head of Kronus. And he has come, a young blood, by whose cradle heroes and graces have stood guard. His name is Johannes Brahms.... He bore, even in outward appearance, all the signs that announce to us: this is a chosen one.... His comrades greet him on his first trip through the world, where perhaps wounds await him, but also laurel branches and palms; we bid him welcome as a powerful combatant.<sup>70</sup>

Such unbridled messianic language filled Brahms with apprehension about his compositional gifts. Yet the essay also “anointed” this musical messiah with a deep sense of calling toward his role as a composer.

Brahms’s *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, op. 45, exhibits his own personal desire for comfort and peace over against his sense of longing, a longing intensified by the deaths of his mother and of Schumann. At the same time that the *Requiem* exhibits Brahms’s own desire to bestow peace upon himself, it is a work by which Brahms also desires to grant that peace to humanity as a whole. By “bearing the cross” which Schumann’s essay placed on him, Brahms intended to give the fruits of that “cross-bearing” to others. Although colored by the messianic language of the Romantic Era, Brahms’s sense of calling is still deeply Lutheran, in that he recognized that the divine Word alone could give confident peace.

As a work of high compositional craft, Brahms’s *Requiem* found equally high acclaim.

Brahms’s *Deutsches Requiem* is penetrating through and through when it is heard in excellent performances. It is music of inexpressible richness, of power and freshness, now touchingly elegiac, now lovingly lyrical, now strongly dramatic. It is a work of church music, with the finest contrapuntal art clothed in popular melody and a harmony and orchestration so magnificent and

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<sup>70</sup> Robert Schumann, quoted in Daniel Beller-McKenna, *Brahms, The Bible, and Post-Romanticism: Cultural Issues in Johannes Brahms’s Later Settings of Biblical Texts, 1877-1896* (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1995), p. 25.



effectual, in comparison to which other works up to now rarely gratified the laymen of every nation as well as the musical connoisseurs of every faction.<sup>71</sup>

The *Requiem*, as a composition of church music, does present a challenge. While the texts of the *Requiem* are drawn from the Bible—passages from both Old and New Testaments, plus the Apocrypha<sup>72</sup>—they present neither the traditional order of the Requiem Mass in the Roman Catholic Church, nor are they the traditional passages of Lutheran Passions. Furthermore, while the words of Jesus from the Beatitudes are included in the opening and closing movements, together with an additional movement containing words of Jesus which Brahms added after the premier of the work, there is no explicit reference to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus in the *Requiem*. This has led to the surmise that Brahms's faith was rather ambivalent when it came to issues of Christian doctrine, and therefore his music is not adequately Christological in its aesthetic.

It is not an ambivalence which moves Brahms to organize the texts he has chosen. Raised in Lutheran piety from his youth, Brahms is more concerned with bestowing the peace of Christ by his *Requiem* rather than singing about the account of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The work is more properly considered a proclamation and a bestowal of the peace of Christ (*Fig. 10*, next page) than a musical setting of the history of Christ's work. Nevertheless, because the references to Christ's passion, death and resurrection are implicit rather than explicit, the organizers of the premier of the *Requiem* supplemented its performance by including a soloist who sang "I Know that My Redeemer Liveth" from Handel's *Messiah*!

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<sup>71</sup> From an editorial by Adolf Schubring in an 1869 issue of the *Allgemeinen Musikalischen Zeitung*; quoted in Floros, *Johannes Brahms*, pp. 266-267.

<sup>72</sup> Lutheranism, growing out of the Roman Catholic Church, continued to hold the writings of the Apocrypha as edifying works to be read by the faithful, though they did not grant them canonical authority.



Though all the texts of the *Requiem* are biblical and exist in a specifically Christian context there, Brahms can be seen considerably to weaken the Christian meanings through his precise selections and juxtapositions: his text sequences are interesting for what they omit as well as what they include. He focuses on comfort, hope, reassurance, and reward for personal effort, conspicuously avoiding judgment, vengeance, religious symbols and—above all—the sacrifice of Christ for human sin.<sup>73</sup>

The image shows a musical score for the opening of the final movement of Brahms's *Requiem*. The score is for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano. The tempo is marked 'Solennelemente' and the dynamics are 'f' (forte). The lyrics are: 'Bless - ed are the dead, who in the Lord die, from hence -'. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

Figure 10 The opening portion of the calm, peaceful and peace-bestowing final movement of Brahms's *Requiem*, "Blessed are the dead who died in the Lord"

Indeed, a systematic theologian with an ear for thoroughness would find Brahms's texts weakened without explicit reference to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Yet Brahms is on similar ground with Martin Luther in this. Brahms's implicit Redeemer is so intimately joined with the one who grieves in this *Requiem*

<sup>73</sup> Michael Musgrave, *Brahms: A German Requiem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 21.



that the two are indistinguishable (*genus tapeinotikon*). At the same time, because the one who grieves can still sing “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord”, Brahms’s texts reveal that the implicit Redeemer, the Word made flesh, is in fact present in the Word of those texts, so that the hearer shares in His glory (*genus maiestaticum*).

This profound union of Brahms’s musical texts with the presence of the Christ in those texts can be expressed in the language of Schleiermacher, whose influence shaped so much of 19<sup>th</sup> century Lutheran theology. Schleiermacher clothes the *communicatio idiomatum* in new dress.

The darkened and imperfect God-consciousness by itself is not an existence of God in human nature but only in so far as we bring Christ with us in thought and relate it to Him. So that originally it is found nowhere but in Him, and He is the only ‘other’ in which there is an existence of God in the proper sense, so far, that is, as we posit God-consciousness in His self-consciousness as continually and exclusively determining every moment, and consequently also this perfect indwelling of the Supreme Being as His peculiar being and His innermost self. Indeed, working backwards we must now say, if it is only through Him that the human God-consciousness becomes an existence of God in human nature...in truth, He alone mediates all existence of God in the world and all revelation of God through the world, in so far as He bears within Himself the whole new creation which contains and develops the potency of the God-consciousness.<sup>74</sup>

The same Christological conclusion can be expressed in the older sermonic language of Martin Luther.

‘Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.’ Let them paw and stamp their feet, let them threaten and frighten as they please, were the water never so deep we shall nevertheless go through it with Christ.... ‘In the world,’ he says, ‘you shall have afflictions and tribulations, but in me you shall have peace.’<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, pp. 387-388.

<sup>75</sup> Martin Luther, “Sermon on Cross and Suffering, 1530,” *Luther’s Works, Vol. 51* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 203.



By either Christological explication, Schleiermacher's or Luther's, what Brahms has crafted in his *Requiem* is fully rooted in the Lutheran theological tradition.

If the *Requiem* is a large scale example of Brahms's messianic quest for peace, his smaller, later works are equally fervent—if not more so—in their expressions of longing. The eleven *Chorale Preludes* for organ are gems.

An ideal of beauty and the lyrical—the search for a powerful simplicity of musical expression, transfigured by the clarity and sustained logic of musical form and development (qualities that Heinrich Schenker so valued in Brahms)—seemed to renew his faith in the necessity of art and the capacity for awe in the face of life's sufferings, joy, loss and contradiction. Wisdom and pessimism, as well as affirmation and religious faith, are inextricable intertwined... Brahms's mature works sought to communicate hope without any falsification of the harsh complexities of life so that individuals in an endangered modern world might be inspired to combat the erosion of intimacy, imagination, culture, civility and civilization.<sup>76</sup>

The *Chorale Preludes*, *op. 122*, are a kind of *Orgelbüchlein* after that of J. S. Bach.

Though the preludes display a Bachian skill at setting the *cantus firmus* of the chorales in various voices, the effect of the preludes is totally Brahmsian, even to the choice of the chorales he set. The chorale *O Welt ich muss dich lassen* is set twice, as is true for the tune of the passion chorale, *Herzlich tut mich verlangen*. The pathos of the chorale prelude *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele* portrays the intimate longing of the soul for communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper in anticipation of the hope-filled conclusion in the chorale text: "Through the gifts Thou here dost give me, As Thy guest in heaven receive me." Even the setting of the Praetorius Christmas chorale, *Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen* within Brahms's *op. 122* evokes a quiet sort of joy.

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<sup>76</sup> Leon Botstein, "Brahms and his audience: the later Viennese years 1875-1897," *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 75.



Their minute contrapuntal finish, as unobtrusive as it is masterly, recalls Bach; while the ripe and clarified experience of life, the deep seriousness expressed in them, is Brahmsian. Even from the ideas upon which they are based it can at once be observed that they were written on the threshold of death...no less than eight of them deal with the 'last things'—death, the Passion and death of Jesus Christ, bidding farewell to this world, and eternal life in the next.<sup>77</sup>



Figure 11 The opening portion of the chorale prelude, op. 122, no. 11, *O Welt, ich muß dich lassen*

The *Vier ernste Gesänge*, op. 121, like the *Chorale Preludes*, coming shortly before Brahms's death, have presented a challenge as great as that of the *Requiem*. These "Serious Songs" are flavored with such pessimism, even for the world-weary Brahms. Nietzsche heard in Brahms's music a "melancholy of powerlessness" (*Melancholie des Unvermögens*). Over against this melancholy coupled with an unfulfilled longing (unfulfilled because of powerlessness) which he heard in Brahms's music, Nietzsche held up the redeeming quality of music's art in the midst of tragedy.

<sup>77</sup> Walter Niemann, *Brahms* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935), p. 252.



Now no comfort avails any more; longing transcends a world after death, even the gods; existence is negated along with its glittering reflection in the gods or in an immortal beyond. Conscious of the truth he has once seen, man now sees everywhere only the horror or absurdity of existence.... Here, when the danger to his will is greatest, *art* approaches as a saving sorceress, expert at healing. She alone knows how to turn these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live: these are the *sublime* as the artistic taming of the horrible, and the *comic* as the artistic discharge of the nausea of absurdity.<sup>78</sup>

Beyond Nietzsche, however, the Christian life as Martin Luther knew it and wrote of it (*i.e.*, *oratio*, *meditatio*, *tentatio*, all three together) shapes Brahms's "serious" songs and finds expression in them. Brahms, like Luther who was no stranger to "the depths of woe," could taste the depths of human hopelessness and discover that even there the Christ is present. The first two songs are settings of texts from the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes, lamenting the empty vanity of life. The third song is based on a text from Ecclesiasticus, "O death, how bitter you are." Then suddenly the fourth "serious" song takes up St. Paul's hymn on love from I Corinthians 13. This fourth song is not an after thought, nor is it an isolated song set apart from the other three nihilistic texts. Rather, this fourth song is the full expression of that perfect Christological Love "who lays down His life for His friends." In the deepest darkness of Brahms's longing, the Christ is there. The Redeemer's love which carried Him into death is united through these texts to Brahms's own impending death.

*Glaube* and *Hoffnung*, then, were clearly lacking as spiritual attributes throughout the last third of Brahms's life. The superiority of *Liebe*, however, was the central point of op. 121, no. 4. Love was, for Brahms, the greatest of the spiritual attributes that he addressed through the Bible in op. 74, 109, 110 and 121, for it was the one that allowed him to overcome his own melancholy and the cultural

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<sup>78</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*: quoted in *A Modern Book of Esthetics: An Anthology*, ed. Melvin Rader (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p.122.



pessimism that he could no longer abide near the end of his life as he returned in so many ways to the Romanticism of his youth.<sup>79</sup>

Not only does Brahms return to the Romanticism of his youth, but this old man, deeply influenced by the *Sehnsucht* of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany, also returned to the Lutheranism of his youth, expressing in music a lifetime of being what Luther called “a theologian of the cross.”

### *Conclusion*

The close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the opening years of the 20<sup>th</sup> witness the Lutheran aesthetic in music straining toward something which it has not yet clearly perceived. There are glimmers of a restored, renewed Christological center to the music of Lutheran composers and musicians, but it remains hampered by the remnants of Pietism and Rationalism and by the influences of Late Romanticism.

The fullness of a Lutheran aesthetic in music, as it developed from Luther, Walter and Rhau, through Praetorius and Schütz, with Kepler’s insights mingled with it, and sounding forth in the music of Bach, a fullness that was known not by a repristination of the past but by carrying the past into the present in a new way, would have to wait a little while longer.

It will take another war, the First World War, to provide the catalyst (the cataclysmic shock) to bring new life out of this fermentation. Rather, it will be the living Word Incarnate, hidden in the immense destructive suffering of the war, who will bring a new, resurrected life to the Lutheran aesthetic in the years following 1918. Not surprisingly when one considers the *theologia crucis* and the hiddenness of God *sub contraria specie*, the new, full and free expression of the Lutheran

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<sup>79</sup> Beller-McKenna, *Brahms, the Bible, and Post-Romanticism*, p. 223.



aesthetic in music will emerge in one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most oppressive settings: Nazi Germany. Conversely, the Lutheran aesthetic in music will suffer in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, weighed down by a burden of principles and laws, in one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most free settings: the United States.



## **Chapter 5   *Canticum Novum: Out of the Old Something New* The Reemergence of the Reformation**

*Tradition and renewal must go hand in hand.* — Egil Hovland

The 20<sup>th</sup> century, for the Lutheran aesthetic in music, witnesses the greatest flowering of composition, performance and theological reflection concerning music since the first years of the Lutheran Reformation. This development is self-consciously Christological. At the same time, as the finest expressions of the Lutheran aesthetic in music in earlier eras have presented, music's art is imbuing older forms and ideas with new insight, together with the creation of new forms and sounds of the Gospel in music, both inside and outside the Lutheran Divine Service.

This final chapter of Part One will follow this 20<sup>th</sup> century development of new music building on the old in the hostile environment of Nazi Germany by composers Ernst Pepping and Hugo Distler, together with theological reflection by Oskar Söhngen. In Denmark Thomas Laub will lead a renewal in Lutheran church music by his study of the past. Gustaf Aulén in Sweden will articulate the definitive element of the freedom of the Gospel for a true Lutheran aesthetic in music. In Norway Egil Hovland and Knut Nystedt will also reinvigorate older music in new ways, while composing in sonorities that are new in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They too will recognize that their musical craft is an Office of the Gospel.

The chapter will close with a brief survey of developments in the Lutheran aesthetic in music among Lutherans in the United States. Following a path



previously traveled in Europe, Lutherans in the United States will witness the heights of possibility and the disintegration of the Lutheran aesthetic as it is impacted by the upheavals of the 1960s and the rampant consumerism of late 20<sup>th</sup> century American culture.

*Oskar Söhngen and New Church Music in Germany*

In October 1937, over 20,000 people attended a week long *Festival of German Church Music* in Berlin. That this event takes place in Berlin in 1937 immediately raises questions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century mind. That the Nazi press found material to commend and material to condemn in the 1937 *Festival* complicates the analysis of this event. That the *Reichskirche*, which sponsored the *Festival*, has been rightly criticized for its complicity with the Nazis further complicates the analysis. Nevertheless, in view of the purposes of this study, it is because of the prophetic voice of the new music heard in the 1937 *Festival of German Church Music*—a voice which the Nazis furiously and forcefully attempted to silence—that the Lutheran aesthetic in music receives new life. The Christological elements of the Lutheran aesthetic are pronounced in this era—the freedom in the Gospel so clear when set against the stark tyranny of the Nazi regime, the divine glory hidden in the weakness and suffering of the composers and supporters of the new church music, and the sharing in resurrection hope through music by the Christian faithful who opposed the Nazis. As the Lutheran *theologia crucis* declares, the new life in Christ's resurrection comes with, not despite, the agony of Christ's cross, so the Lutheran aesthetic in music receives new life not despite the Nazi opposition but precisely because of it.



The festival week, October 7-13, included worship and concerts in settings large and small around the German capital, the venues most conducive for hearing new music from German church musicians. The number of compositions and composers represented made the *Festival* a remarkable event. At the same time it was a tragic event in that less than two years' time the world would be at war. The politics of Nazi Germany and the profound costs of the Second World War in terms of human life and destruction of property (including churches) crippled the rich promise of new music emerging in the pre-war era, and from the 1937 *Festival* in particular.

In the midst of those best and worst of times, Oskar Söhngen, director of the *Festival of German Church Music* put into words the *kairos* moment of the 1937 *Festival*. In the foreword to the program book he wrote:

Since the church music renewal movement of the last years has pursued its work so attentively, there can be no doubt that the Festival of German Church Music must come only once. The question then of whether the Festival is timely, whether it is taking place too soon or too late, weighs less seriously than the certainty that the time for such an undertaking is ripe. An event such as the Festival of German Church Music is justified only if it bears for itself the testimony that it is necessary.... Were we not of the conviction that our church music today well may be permitted the risk of this judgment then we would not have grasped fully what an unusual and, in greater hindsight, importune undertaking the Festival of German Church Music proved to be. But we are thereby persuaded at the deepest level that God has let His new breath blow over the field of church music, and today, after a long time of standstills and decline, new life has stepped mightily into the light.... German evangelical church music lives; more than that, in our day it has been given a resurrection, provided new blood and a future. Before our own eyes a page is being written of a new, second history of church music.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Oskar Söhngen, "Zur Einführung", *Fest der deutschen Kirchenmusik* (Berlin-Steglitz: Eckart Verlag, 1937), pp. 12-13.



One may read between the lines and sense some of the complications and obstructions put in place by the Nazis, but the promise of a new song far outweighed the importunity of a festival of this kind in Nazi Germany.

Ernst Pepping, one of the acclaimed composers represented at the 1937 *Festival* had published his little volume *Stilwende der Musik* (*Style Turn in Music*) in 1934. Within this little book of music theory and composition Pepping outlined how new music turned upon a grasp of the old.

Now the word *atonality*, through its association with the battle cry of the last ten years, has become a bourgeois fear, a shibboleth, under which nothing correct can be transposed. In any case, it bears the sense of bad sonorities, of overloaded dissonance. Furthermore, in the last years it has been united especially with the conception of the morally reprehensible, Bolshevik culture.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1 A portion of Ernst Pepping's *Komm, heiliger Geist, Herre Gott*, from his *Großes Orgelbuch III*, 1941

Pepping goes on, however, to defend the term “atonality”, explaining that while it is new it has its roots in the music of the past. He recognizes that the serial compositions of Arnold Schönberg and his circle deliberately loosen the concept of

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Pepping, *Stilwende der Musik* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1934), p. 83.



the scale, a seven tone row, by their twelve tone compositional technique.<sup>3</sup> In part, Pepping suggests, Schönberg's purpose was to "clear the air" of Romantic excesses

in tonality. Yet Pepping is quick to assert that not all "atonal" music is as radical as the compositions emanating from the Schönberg circle.

Polyphony (another shibboleth of that era) is an elastic concept which one can employ for diverse music, for example the music of Bach or Reger, as also for a mass of Josquin or a *Lied*-setting of Senfl. One understands the concepts of homophony and polyphony as antitheses meaning *same* sounding and many or *different* sounding. The question then becomes a matter of which material values are same or different in a musical setting—in their time (rhythm) or in their spatial properties (melody or harmony). One thence must distinguish rhythmic, melodic and harmonic homophony—homo-rhythm, homo-melody, homo-harmony—as well as rhythmic, melodic and harmonic polyphony—poly-rhythm, poly-melody, poly-harmony. Here then are two concepts which were previously known by other names: homo-harmony and poly-harmony are nothing other than tonality and atonality.<sup>4</sup>

Pepping's contemporary, Paul Hindemith, addressed the misleading nature of the term, "atonality," from a different perspective.

Anyone to whom tone is more than a note on paper or a key pressed down, anyone who has ever experienced the intervals in singing, especially with others, as manifestations of bodily tension, of the conquest of space, and of the consumption of energy...must come to the conclusion that there can be no such thing as atonal music, in which the existence of tone-relationships is denied.<sup>5</sup>

Hindemith's theory of musical composition has antecedents in the ancient Greek understanding of music in nature, while Pepping emphasizes the nature of music as music. Like Boethius, Hindemith proceeds from nature to music. Pepping, like

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<sup>3</sup> "Composition with twelve tones has no other aim than comprehensibility. In view of certain events in recent musical history, this might seem astonishing..." Arnold Schönberg, "Composition with Twelve Tones 1941", *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schönberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 215, 218.

<sup>4</sup> Pepping, *Stilwende der Musik*, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition, Book I*, trans. Arthur Mendel (New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1937), p. 155.



Praetorius before him, proceeds from the Gospel in music to the nature of musical sound.

Another one of the young composers of new music in the 1937 *Festival of German Church Music* was Hugo Distler. His impact on the direction of new music was that of a tragic figure. Highly acclaimed as a performer, choir director and composer, Distler took his own life in 1942 after a prolonged period of stress because of the war and his own creative “demon,”<sup>6</sup> and also after receiving a draft notice to serve in the *Wehrmacht*; a summons he could not fulfill in clear conscience. Despite his suicide, Distler is a Christ figure in this era, for it is in Distler that one may see the “cross” and its full, terrible cost by the Office that the musician shares with Christ.

As an organist, Distler served at St. Jacobi Church in the north German city of Lübeck, a city rich in the musical tradition of the Lutheran Church. The *Abendmusiken* tradition in Lübeck of performing sacred musical works in a concert setting was still a part of musical life in that city. It had grown from the sacred concerts of Franz Tunder at St. Mary’s Church in 1646, developing to a high degree during the time of Dieterich Buxtehude, who composed a new form of oratorio for the concert series<sup>7</sup>, and with highs and lows and interruptions reached the rich variety during Distler’s years. The *Abendmusiken* represented a challenge to Lutheran theologians and church musicians who saw Lutheran music primarily confined to the Divine Service. One critic described the concerts dismissively as a

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<sup>6</sup> In a letter to Oskar Söhngen, January 27, 1938, Distler expressed some of his unease: “And the crisis in me? I told you already, that I am full of disquiet. I let myself be forced today, to go wherever my ‘demon’ wanted.” Quoted in Ursula Herrmann, *Hugo Distler: Rufer und Mahner* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1972), p. 118.

<sup>7</sup> Buxtehude’s multi-sectioned oratorios designed for the weeks of the concert season may have influenced the form of J. S. Bach’s multi-sectioned Christmas Oratorio. For more on the *Abendmusiken* see Synder, *Dieterich Buxtehude: Organist in Lübeck*, pp. 56-72.



venue where organists perform “as free artists, not as an employee of his church but as a publican crying before his art and sharing in the responsibility for financing it.”<sup>8</sup> For one who defines the Lutheran aesthetic through the prism of liturgy, the *Abendmusiken* concerts are a problem. For a Christological aesthetic, in which the living Word “sings” equally comfortably in the Divine Service as in the concert, this tradition is not a problem, but rather a further example of that aesthetic.

Between 1931 and 1937, the years young Hugo Distler served at St. Jacobi, the list of composers represented in the evening performances reads like a “who’s who” of Lutheran church musicians: Walther, Praetorius, Hassler, Scheidt, Schütz, Pachelbel, Bruhns, Buxtehude, Bach, to name a few. There were also performances of new music by living church musicians, including Distler’s own works and the works of Walter Kraft, a fellow Lübecker, and Ernst Pepping.

Distler’s playing was critically acclaimed:

This highly gifted young Lübeck master has opened an always more vigorous profusion of creative aspects and possibilities: their essential elements being an elementary joyful manner of playing, an inner relationship with the light-hearted colorfulness of the baroque organ, and a remarkable wealth of expression, which in fervent simplicity stretches even to the collective angularity of north-gothic wooden sculpture. Hugo Distler is the great hope of German church music, even of German music.<sup>9</sup>

Another critic wrote:

The works of two young Lübeck church musicians, Walter Kraft and Hugo Distler, were heard in the sacred concert. For me, there can be no doubt that the St. Jacobi organist is, musically speaking, the deeper personality—not only the more mature but also the more enlightened. Hugo Distler always surprises a person anew with the accuracy of his musical language, a language no longer committed to

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Oskar Söhngen, “Die Lübecker Abendmusiken als kirchengeschichtliches und theologisches Problem (1957),” *Wandel und Beharrung* (Berlin: Verlag Merseburger, 1965), p. 111. Söhngen, who supported performances by church musicians (see pages 217-218 of this thesis), is not so critical in his essay.

<sup>9</sup> Herrmann, *Hugo Distler: Rufer und Mahner*, p. 87.



groping about for the proper expression but already master of it with a sovereignty that is all but amazing for the composer's youth [24 years old]. Additional features of his style, important to him as a church musician, are the religious fervor of his expression, the deep conviction of the holiness of God's Word, and the warmth of feeling elicited by his conviction. This warmth makes itself felt again and again, and one is transported as a result.<sup>10</sup>

For Distler himself, the pleased beneficiary of the reconstructed organ at St. Jacobi's<sup>11</sup>, the sound of the old instruments was being made alive in the present time and thus served as a source of inspiration for his own new music.

In my opinion the ancient organ will only fulfill the mission which it undoubtedly owes to our time if it still proves capable of guiding modern production to new goals and of decisively influencing it. There are already the beginnings of a new organ music directly influenced by the past.... This new type of organ music can only be created by an adventurous, intensive, intentionally exclusive study of the classic type of organ.<sup>12</sup>

The critics agreed:

This young Lübeck master has proved himself more and more as one of the great hopes of German music; he is rooted entirely and vigorously in the north German Baroque with the same understanding for the bright austere colors as we have known them from Buxtehude. In his chorale prelude, *Ach wie flüchtig*, ...the austerity and compositional voice leading...the visionary expressive style...he has the almost gothic delicateness of an exultant melismatic.<sup>13</sup>

While Distler's organ compositions and style of playing received great acclaim from critics and hearers alike, it was his choral music for the church which allowed him his greatest outlet in composition and conducting. His *Geistliche*

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<sup>10</sup> J Hennings, *Lübeckische Blätter*, 74 (1932), 638; quoted in Larry Palmer, *Hugo Distler and His Church Music* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), p. 35.

<sup>11</sup> This instrument was rebuilt according to Baroque principles espoused by the *Orgelbewegung*, a movement dedicated to restoring the sound of the Baroque organ. It was launched with the building of the "Praetorius Organ" in 1921 at the *Musikwissenschaftliches Institut* at Freiburg. This was the first organ of the 20<sup>th</sup> century built to specifications outlined by Michael Praetorius in the second volume (*De organographia*) of his *Syntagma musicum*, 1619.

<sup>12</sup> Distler, in a preface to a collection of his works; quoted in Palmer, *Hugo Distler*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>13</sup> Waldemar Klink, September 15, 1933; quoted in Herrmann, *Hugo Distler: Rufer und Mahner*, p. 88.



*Chormusik*, op. 12, is a unified collection of motets originally conceived to provide one motet for each Sunday of the church year. Only nine motets were finished.

The image shows the opening of Hugo Distler's motet 'Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied' (Op. 12, No. 1). The score is for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The tempo is marked 'I. Rasch, doch nicht hastig. Frei im Zeitmaß' with a metronome marking of 104. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The Soprano part begins with a melismatic line on the word 'Singet'. The Tenor and Bass parts enter with a strong, rhythmic line. The lyrics are: 'Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'meno f'.

Figure 2 The opening of Distler's setting of *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*

The first in the collection was written for *Cantate* Sunday, the fourth Sunday after Easter. Being the first of the motets in the collection, it is significant that Distler set the text of this particular Sunday's introit: "Sing to the Lord a new song" (Fig. 2). The motet opens with an exquisite, melismatic line in octaves by the male voices of the choir on the word *Singet*, "Sing". This unison at the octave, full of strength, together with the rhythmic energy of the strong melodic line announce very forcefully that here is a new song indeed. The first portion of the motet then comes to a close in a musical ecstasy on the words *lobet* and *singet*, "praise" and "sing".



So new is the sound of this musical setting that Distler feels compelled to defend his voice leading in a revealing footnote. It seems he fears that the clash of pitches dictated by the logic of his voice lines opens him to the charge of writing “atonal” music, a charge Ernst Pepping noted as polemical but misguided. Given the tenor of some Nazi critics, Distler’s sensitivity toward his own work was justified.

The image displays two systems of a musical score for a choir. The first system, starting at measure 34, is marked 'Verbreitern' and 'Im Zeitmaß'. It features five staves with vocal parts. The lyrics include 'che Freu - de. Des jauch -', 'Freu - de. Des jauch -', 'che Freu - de.', 'Freu - de, sol - che Freu - de.', and 'sol - che Freu - de.'. The second system, starting at measure 39, is marked 'Verbreitern' and 'Breit'. It also features five staves. The lyrics include 'zen wir und sin - gen dir das Hal - le - lu - ja für und für.', 'zen wir und sin - gen dir das Hal - le - lu - ja für und für.', '... das Hal - le - lu - ja für und für.', 'das Hal - le - lu - ja für und für.', and '... das Hal - le - lu - ja für und für.'. The music is written in a style that combines traditional notation with atonal elements, as noted in the text.

Figure 3 The ecstatic closing of Distler’s *Wachet auf*

Another motet in the collection is written for the Last Sunday of the Church Year. It is based on the Philipp Nicolai chorale, *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*. In this motet Distler displays his skill not only with setting the literal words of the text, but also the full meaning of those words. This motet is an example of what Oskar



Söhngen called *Predigtmusik*, sermonic music.<sup>14</sup> It is both proclamation, *kerygma*, and interpretation, hermeneutics. From the opening fanfare-like use of the voices on the words *Wachet auf*, “Awake”, to the closing ecstasy of *solche Freude*, “such joy”, employing the rhythmic vitality of cross accents and the melismatic *jauchzen*, “rejoice”, in the upper voices, the motet is a musical jewel “wedded” to the Bridegroom mysticism of Nicolai’s Sacrament-inspired chorale text.

This profound gift of musical proclamation and interpretation which Distler displayed in his choral music moved the director of the 1937 *Festival of German Church Music* to include Distler’s works in the festival dedicated to new music. Söhngen’s enthusiasm for Distler’s importance did not diminish in the years following the composer’s death.

Music-making thereby acquired a fresh significance and aim. Because the voice is bound to the word, the burden of the words assumes paramount importance, and vocal music more than any other has the capacity to convey this. Weary of the orgy of continually changing orchestral color, weary also of its own image which suited the music of the *fin de siècle*, the new style of vocal music turned to some event, some message of which it wished to sing and speak. For Hugo Distler this was, first and foremost, the message of the Gospel. He wished to spread it abroad through his music as a declaration, as sermon, song of praise, and as proclamation.... Not, to be sure, the word in its immediately obvious or literal sense; one will search in vain in Distler’s music for illustrative touches, devices of tone coloring, or expressions of *Affekt*. His concern is always with the meaning behind the words, with the spirit and feeling of them, which he brings out in his music.<sup>15</sup>

With the style turn outlined by Ernst Pepping, together with Distler’s new music springing from the old, the experience of listening to the new polyphony brings a question to the fore: how did hearers greet the new music? That 20,000

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<sup>14</sup> See Oskar Söhngen, *Die Wiedergeburt der Kirchenmusik: Wandlungen und Entscheidungen* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1953), p. 104.

<sup>15</sup> Söhngen for the cover of an LP recoding of Distler’s *Geistliche Chormusik*; quoted in Palmer, *Hugo Distler*, pp. 104-105.



people attended the 1937 *Festival* in Berlin testifies to the positive reception of the new music. Nevertheless, the Nazi Party press was highly critical of some of the new music. Distler's organ compositions and especially his concerto for harpsichord and orchestra (a work written to demonstrate the possibilities of writing for old instruments and performed at the 1937 *Festival*) were judged by the Nazis to be "un-German," "cultural Bolshevism" and "degenerate art." In the view of the Nazi cultural watchdogs, especially Josef Goebbels, the young church musicians were too influenced by composers of *entartete Kunst*, "degenerate art": Stravinsky, Schönberg, Hindemith, Webern, Milhaud, Bartok and others.

In a retrospective interview several decades after World War II, Oskar Söhngen was asked about the wisdom of the 1937 *Festival*. The interviewer asked Herr Söhngen whether it was wise, given the political situation, to hold a festival in Berlin dedicated to German church music and so directly provoke the Nazi cultural politicians. "Or can art be considered to have a *status confessionis*?"

If you will, can we still speak of a *status confessionis*? Because the immediate triggering moment for the plan of the Festival of German Church Music was the ever, clearly-defined war of extinction against the church, then one already assumed to know that the death knell had been rung. Yet thereby grew up, as it were over night, a new harvest of church music growing to maturity as any in the first half of the century. And therein lay the truly wonder-bound nature of this example, that God had aroused the composers—men of high order and great artistry—who were conscious of their work and joyful in placing it in service to the persecuted Church. Can it be but conclusive proof of the inner liveliness of the Church, that its tree bore new fruit in abundance? So then the Festival of German Church Music represented at the same time [as the flowering of German church music] a political provocation and, correspondingly, became understood as such by the Party. Goebbels attempted, in the last moments, to prohibit the whole event. He overextended himself by putting an information restriction on the Festival. The Party newspaper, *Der Angriff*, delighted in the attack, denouncing Hugo Distler's 'Concerto for Cembalo and Orchestra' as 'intellectually and artistically decadent' [*Kulturbolschewistisch*] leading to a dangerous point. But for all the good natured people who participated in the



Festival or were led to it, the Festival of German Church music signified a strong encouragement.<sup>16</sup>

The Gospel, with its new life and freedom in Christ, when joined with music will, by its very Christological nature, bring opposition from the powers of the slavery of death, as evidenced in the Nazi regime (*theologia crucis*). Thus the musicians who more fully embodied the Lutheran aesthetic were the very ones more forcefully opposed by the Nazis.

It is perhaps an indication of the volatility of the time that while Söhngen saw the new music as a provocation and inspiration, the old music (that which also embodied the Gospel) could still serve the same purposes in the political strife. Martin Niemöller, the leader among the pastors and theologians of the Confessing Church in Nazi Germany, appealed to the singing of Luther's hymns as the epitome of the "subversive strength" in the old music, now become a "new song" in the politics of the time. In an introduction to a collection of Luther hymns published in 1936, Niemöller noted:

The congregation sings, not because it has learned to sing, not because our movement [the Confessing Church] has had success! It sings because it must sing! It is not pious wishes and sentiments which now finally have found their proper expression. It is a new singing and a new song which God has placed in our mouths. This singing is both proclamation of God's Word and confession of God's Word. And so we sing each hymn with greater joy...<sup>17</sup>

While the Nazis had political reasons and purposes behind their manipulations of the attitudes toward the new church music, the new music presented some challenges of its own for listeners. These challenges increasingly

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<sup>16</sup> Oskar Söhngen, *Musica Sacra: zwischen Gestern und Morgen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 179-180.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Christa Reich, *Evangelium: klingendes Wort* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1997), p.92. Reich, as one removed in time from the Nazi era, provides an insightful and sympathetic, yet critical, look at the 1937 *Festival* and the role of music under the Third Reich. See pp. 71-104.



troubled the critics as the new music evolved in the years following World War

II. The critics of atonal music and the use of Schönberg's serial techniques of composition for church music, charged that this music became too far removed from the congregation's listening ability and, therefore, beyond the congregation's comprehension. In the critics' eyes, church music had followed Schönberg in maintaining, *L'Art pour l'art*, "Art for art's sake."

Hans Joachim Moser, the biographer and champion of the music of Heinrich Schütz, expressed this concern:

The hearer (as member of the congregation) does not experience the power of Christian music if he is bewildered by it as an incomprehensible puzzle. In the confusion of his soul he remains untouched or entirely astonished and insulted rather than finding a quality of understanding; an understanding not induced through intellectual, aesthetic persuasion, but rather immediately [by the music].<sup>18</sup>

Ernst Pepping had anticipated this criticism already in his *Stilwende der Musik* of 1934, long before the atonal music of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Employing the language of the philosophy of phenomenology Pepping noted

The bond between the work and hearers is permitted to be so much more intense and the community's crafting power of music can be displayed so much more uninhibitedly, the less amateurish and the more artistic the reproduction of the work is. This arrangement cannot be disproved by an allusion to church music forms. The hearer is enveloped in an active collaboration with the [musical] work if two spiritually related, and yet fully different, spheres are united: the congregation of the Divine Service [*Gemeinde des Gottesdienstes*] means something different than the community of the art service [*Gemeinschaft des Kunstdienstes*]. In the singing congregation the power of the Church is expressed, but not the power

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Söhnngen, *Die Wiedergeburt der Kirchenmusik*, p. 107. Moser portrayed the plight of church music in the first half 20<sup>th</sup> century like Albrecht Dürer's woodcut, *Ritter zwischen Tod und Teufel* ("Knight between Death and Devil"). Church music, like the knight's horse, an *Eques auratus*, must carry the Church (*Ritter*, the knight) between historicism (*Tod*, death) and avant-gardism (*Teufel*, devil). Moser is not as convinced as his "esteemed friend" Oskar Söhnngen that serial compositions will inspire new church music. See Hans Joachim Moser, "Umschau: Kirchenmusik zwischen Historismus und Avantgardismus," *Musik in Zeit und Raum* (Berlin: Verlag Merseburger, 1960), pp.226-234.



of art.... What is significant in the Church can become trivial to nonsense in the concert hall.<sup>19</sup>

Pepping maintains that the objectivity of a musical work is not independent of the subjectivity of that work heard in the experience of the worshiping congregation. At the same time, however, in the Lutheran aesthetic the congregation's subjectivity exists in an eschatological tension, the now with the not yet. The resurrected Christ shares in this music so that the eternal song of eschatological fulfillment, while transcending human comprehension in time, imbues the worshiping congregation with the discomfort of the now/not yet Lutheran aesthetic in music; a tension resolved only in the eschaton.

Thus Pepping does not permit the subjectivity of a congregation to dominate the objectivity of the musical work (an objectivity imbued with a proleptic eschatology). If the worshiping congregation, the *Gemeinde des Gottesdienstes*, is to be more than an aesthetic community, a *Gemeinschaft des Kunstdienstes*, reacting subjectively to the music heard, the issue becomes deeper than the performance of church music, the reproduction of a work.

It is not enough to carry new purpose to the outer regions of art [*i.e.*, the reproduction of a work], it must push forward to the inner, center point of music's order [a new disposition toward the work itself]. The community's conception [especially the congregation as an artistic community] must be formed within the *stilsymbol* of a new period [a new period granted "newness" by the resurrection of Christ and also the eschatological newness revealed in Christ's resurrection].<sup>20</sup>

For all of its insights, however, phenomenology is inadequate for a full Christological aesthetic. In a musical setting of the *Credo* phenomenology can assert, for instance, that the crucifixion becomes

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<sup>19</sup> Pepping, *Stilwende der Musik*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.



musicalized: the Nicene Creed, against all odds, has become a musical experience. So it is no longer a question of whether or not music has the power to express, represent, or symbolize this or that; rather, the ‘this or that’ *is* the music which we are experiencing.<sup>21</sup>

What this phenomenology fails to appreciate is that the Creed does not simply confess a “musicalized” crucifixion. It is a *crucifixus...pro nobis*. It is not enough that the crucifixion of Jesus is truly experienced in a musical setting. Jesus is crucified “for us.” The words “for us” (*pro nobis*) call for faith. The presence of the Christ in and with music makes the worshiping congregation more than an aesthetic community. The creative Word fashions the proclamation and its hearing.

In Lutheran hermeneutics, “Scripture is its own interpreter.” Similarly the work of new music is itself the definition of interpretation, the apprehension of the music. Yet this apprehension occurs within a “hermeneutical circle.” The Scripture, as *norma normans*, is considered in the context of the Lutheran Confessions, the *norma normata*.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, a musical work in the Lutheran Church is apprehended within the “hermeneutical circle” of a worshiping congregation’s music in one point in time, within the context of the accumulated musical tradition of the worshiping congregations through time. “From what rests on the surface one is led to the depths.”<sup>23</sup>

Oskar Söhngen, in his zeal to promote the new church music, goes straight to the depth of the issue, to the center of the “hermeneutical circle.”

If contemporary church music should be in good hands anywhere,  
how much so should it be in the Church? I say it with all seriousness:

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Clifton, *Music as Heard: A Study in Applied Phenomenology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 194. Clifton’s study is insightfully suggestive despite its short-comings in the light of Christology.

<sup>22</sup> The Lutheran Confessions are the “norm that is normed,” the correct exposition of the Scriptures, which are the “norming norm.”

<sup>23</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Essential Husserl*, ed. Donn Welton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. ix.



God's Word gives it an immutable naturalization in the territory of the Church. *Cantate Domini canticum novum!* 'Sing to the Lord a new song!' so we rightfully sing with one accord, yet with thoughtless forgone conclusion, each year in the *Cantate*-cry of the Psalmist. But has it once become clear to us—in such flashes of illumination with which we suddenly plumb the depths of its hidden difficulties, of what until now we have taken as self-evident—what that cry summons from us? That God expects a song from our mouths, a song sung with our tongues, spoken in the language of our time? ...Displayed here is a clear divine summons [*Gottesforderung*]: our singing is to be new in each day, as God's goodness and compassion is new each day.<sup>24</sup>

The musical score is for a lied setting by Ernst Pepping. It is written for a soloist (Soprano) and organ. The tempo is marked 'Ruhig' (Calm) and the dynamics are 'p' (piano) and 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The score is in 4/4 time. The lyrics are in German: 'Ich steh an—dei—ner Krip-pen hier, o Je—su—lein, mein Le—ben, ich ste—he, bring und schen-ke dir, was du mir hast ge—'. The score consists of two systems. The first system has three staves: the top staff is for the soloist, the middle staff is for the organ, and the bottom staff is for the organ. The second system has three staves: the top staff is for the soloist, the middle staff is for the organ, and the bottom staff is for the organ. The organ part is played on a three-manual organ, with the manuals indicated by 'I (III)' and 'II'.

Figure 4 A lied setting by Ernst Pepping for soloist and organ

<sup>24</sup> Söhnngen, *Die Wiedergeburt der Kirchenmusik*, p. 9. Söhnngen in 1932 is expressing the same hermeneutical insight which Hans-Georg Gadamer would come to express in 1960 in his book, *Wahrheit und Methode* by way of Martin Luther: *Qui non intelligit res, non potest ex verbis sensum elicere*. For Gadamer the issue is words. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 2002), pp.171ff. For Söhnngen, to fully know the new music one must know the *res* of God's goodness and compassion, truly new each day; and in knowing God's goodness and compassion, one may then understand the new music.



Furthermore, some music within the Divine Service is *Predigtmusik*, music which preaches the Word in the subjectivity of the preacher's personality. In this case the preacher is the performing church musician or choir. This type of music would include the motets of a Hugo Distler or the choral settings of an Ernst Pepping. It is music imbued with the personality of the composer.

At the same time some music is liturgical music, of an objective nature, avoiding individual subjectivity. In the liturgy the entire congregation as one stands together *coram Deo*. "Liturgical music walks behind the Word." The danger in liturgical music, Söhngen suggests, is that subjectivity on the part of the congregation tempts the liturgical music to descend into an appealing, easy to handle musical vocabulary. Here again, he writes, the new music can support the many dimensions of the life of faith within each congregation member to stand together with all members as one congregation.

The best works of a Distler, David, Micheelsen, Wenzel, Reda, Bornefeld and particularly also of a Pepping show that the unity of the liturgy need not let go the substance of musical expression.<sup>25</sup>

This is true even if the music is not immediately comprehensible to the congregation, for the living Word is efficacious in itself, and in the music with which it is embodied, before and apart from the worshipers' comprehension.

It is precisely this vital, living phenomenon of objectivity and subjectivity, within and across time which serves to bring to light the faith dimension of the Word of God. This "bringing to light" occurs within the experience of the worshiping congregation, calling the congregation to grow in faith. Into this the church musician has a significant Office. It is an Office equally as important as, and

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<sup>25</sup> Söhngen. *Die Wiedergeburt der Kirchenmusik*, p. 105.



equally involved with, the Office of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments.

The church musician's *Amt* (Office) lives within an equilibrium, an important balance between the liturgical and the artistic. "The Office of church musician is a liturgical Office [*kultisches Amt*]...The Office of the church musician is an artistic Office [*künstlerisches Amt*]." <sup>26</sup> It is the same balance, because of its Christological nature, that was difficult to maintain in the early days of the Reformation.

As a *künstlerisches Amt* the church musician has the need to perform in concert. "Not only do church musicians have a right of performance in concert, it is a fundamental element of their occupation." <sup>27</sup> This concertizing is an education for the congregation through the experience of listening to the musical performance. In a concert setting the church musician may present musical works that are beyond the liturgical comprehension of the congregation. Yet by experience and familiarity through a concert setting, these works may, in time, become accessible in the Divine Service by the church musician's *kultisches Amt*. This concert-performing is possible within the *kultisches Amt*, not only in the preludes and postludes of the service, but also by the liturgical music set for choir or for choir and congregation in alternation, as well as psalm settings or hymn preludes.

In the later years of his life Oskar Söhngen was not as hopeful concerning the future of church music as he had been in 1937. This did not mean that he had given up on another rebirth of church music as he had witnessed in those pre-World War II years. In a 1964 essay entitled "Where Does Church Music Stand Today?"

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<sup>26</sup> Oskar Söhngen, *Das Kirchen Musikalische Amt* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1950). pp. 34-35.

<sup>27</sup> Söhngen, *Musica Sacra*, p. 181.



Söhngen listed the positive and negative influences that impacted the future of church music.

1. It can be only to the benefit of church music when the storm blows in its face for the moment, rousing it from its comfortable position.
2. What the church needs for its Divine Service is not the complaisant service of a small-checked churchly *Gebrauchtmusik* [e.g., as the Nazis envisioned and the complicit *Reichskirche* musicians supplied] but rather the genuine partnership of great church music. It would be good if this was recognized also by the theologians.
3. It is necessary to remember that *Luther's* praise of music refers to *all* good music. Particularly he praised music which is united with the Word of God.
4. Now I have already indicated the tension [*Spannung*] which one has to bear and which is inherent in the name 'church music'—to give the Church what belongs to the Church and also to do so without failing to give music its due. Only truly *great* music will be genuine liturgical music, as only a *master* can write truly simple music.
5. Honor the masters of church music, not only praising them but also performing them! I must say it once more: the most effective means to overcome certain crisis phenomena is the decisive affirmation of an obligation toward church music as great art.
6. It cannot be taken for granted that the witness of serial music must necessarily and permanently retain a romantic-individualist and sublimely differentiating nature because *Schönberg*, *Webern* and *Berg* came out of the Late-Romantic school.
7. We should take seriously our responsibility toward the Divine Service and the man of today, above all that we do not withhold from him that church music in which and through which something actually *comes to pass*.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Oskar Söhngen, "Wo steht die Kirchenmusik heute?" *Wandel und Beharrung: Vorträge und Abhandlungen über Kirchenmusik und Liturgie* (Berlin: Verlag Merseburger, 1965), pp. 67-71.



*Gregorian Chant with a Nordic Accent*

In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, renewal movements within the churches of Denmark, Norway and Sweden had profound impact on church music, old and new. In fact, as the experiences of Germany demonstrated in previous section, Nordic composers appealed to the music of the past as the foundation for creating new music. The renewal movements in the Scandinavian churches led to a renewed understanding of the role of music within the life of the Church, a greater appreciation for the wealth in the Lutheran church music heritage, the inspiring of new music for the church and, in the last quarter of the century, a fragmenting of the various strands of renewal in church music because the new and the old were pitted against each other. One common thread, however, that has been woven throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Nordic churches was the rediscovery of the music of plainsong, Gregorian chant.<sup>29</sup>

The name Thomas Laub (1852-1927) became attached to 20<sup>th</sup> century church music renewal in Denmark. Through intense studies of Danish folk music and the music of the early Lutheran Church, Laub worked to bring forth in the Danish Church of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century music that was “pure” (*ren*), “genuine” (*ægte*), “folkly” (*folkelig*), “churchly” (*kirkelig*), “serving” (*tjenende*) and “living” (*levende*).

Laub published a little book, *Om Kirkesangen* (“Concerning Church Song”) in 1887, in which he outlined a brief history of church music in Denmark and Germany, and from which he drew inspiration for the essential nature of church

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<sup>29</sup> Gregorian chant is not the only form of chant in plainsong tradition, but it is the most dominant and well-known, as well as the form known to Lutheran church music. For a very thorough study of chant see David Hiley, *Western Plainchant: A Handbook* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). For something more concise, see Willi Apel, *Gregorian Chant* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).



song. In that initial book his musical aesthetic (or as others have called it, an “ethic”<sup>30</sup>) was centered in “churchliness” (*kirkelighed*).

A melody’s *churchliness* is inclined at long last to *concern for fitting to its text*, naturally on the assumption that *this at last is churchly*. One learns best to understand whether they pass together by their setting within the church song’s history. I believe a little more conception about it will be welcomed among the frequent controversies between those who differ on the understanding of church song. It is a mistake to support the conflicts with principles such as ‘churchly forms,’ ‘musical beauty,’ ‘that which appeals to the people,’ etc. One would do well to learn that there are many churchly forms and whoever proceeds from the most churchly has spoken from an unchurchly point; that which gives another more musical beauty than one is the power of the performer and the remainder of modern music; that which appeals to the people is not always folkly; and so forth. Of course the more sense one has in this case the more likely they will be able to open a unity which is not merely a compromise for the sake of peace. It will be a concordat which, with cooperation, can bring the case forward. Without knowledge about a thing’s history one cannot possibly avoid a more or less narrow-minded view of it.<sup>31</sup>

It is Laub’s supreme desire to provide such an historical knowledge, not only by the written word, but more so by publishing music that serves as an example of his arguments. The Danish composer and sometime collaborator (though not stress-free) with Laub on his renewal work, Carl Nielsen, once observed,

Now I cannot here begin to lay out a long discussion of what I understand to be good church music, but I refer to works by church musicians of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In eight measures of music they will say more in a better way than I could do writing a whole book! (All who would study these works should consult Thomas Laub’s two collections of old hymns, which are perfectly set in the right spirit [*i den rette ånd*]).<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> See Henrik Glahn, “Indledning” to Thomas Laub, *Kirke og Musik* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads Forlag, 1978), p. XV. Laub’s major writing, *Kirke og Musik* was first published in 1920 and served as the most thorough explanation of his thoughts. It too included musical examples in the appendices to demonstrate his point of view musically.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Laub, *Om Kirkesangen* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 1887), p. 117. As he would do in *Dansk Kirkesang* and *Kirke og Musik*, Laub includes musical examples to illustrate his points.

<sup>32</sup> Carl Nielsen, *Levende Musik* (Oslo: Glydendal Norsk Forlag, 1948), p. 18.



Not words about music, but listening to the music itself; this was significant for Nielsen, as it was for the reformer Thomas Laub.

Laub published a collection of hymns in 1918 entitled *Dansk Kirkesang*. This collection allowed the listener to be convinced of Laub's definition of "churchly" music by means of music itself. The collection is historically developed. Laub calls it "Danish" while recognizing that not all the music within the collection is Danish-born, any more than Christianity originated in Denmark. Nevertheless the music within *Dansk Kirkesang*, like the Christian faith in Denmark, has developed a Danish accent. In the foreword to the work Laub sketches a brief history of how Gregorian chant came to be an integral part of Danish music.

The original mother [of our church song] is the old church song, the Gregorian, which rose up in the Mediterranean countries and with Christianity became introduced into Denmark; here it grew up, esteemed by our fathers, so filling their hearts that out of it came, straight away, a new song, the most Danish of all: our Middle Ages folk melodies.... When the Lutheran hymns came here in the Reformation they were not foreign to us, for they clearly fit with what we had already acquired through church folksongs, as sister to sister.<sup>33</sup>

The romanticism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century has prized the folksong tradition because of its folklikeness, the nationalism which the folk tradition inspired. Laub, however, moved by the folk culture work of fellow Dane, N. F. S. Grundtvig, sought to show the deeper connection between the folk music, particularly the folk church music, and the folk tradition of the Danes as a people by means of the common root of the old church music, the Gregorian chant.

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas Laub, "Forord". *Dansk Kirkesang: Gamle og nye Melodier* (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen Musik-Forlag, 1918). "Laub's argument is a mixture of theological and national value judgments, blending ecclesiastical and cultural identity in the bucket of Grundtvigian 'folkchurchliness' (*folkekirkelighed*)."  
Per Lønning, "The Theology of Sacred Music" (A paper delivered at the Anglo-Nordic-Baltic Theological Conference, "Theology and Music," July 25-30, 2001, Århus, Denmark).



All art, all music, employs and develops forms which are taken from other art, from other music... Should anyone be surprised than the forms and figures which precisely can be used to give expression to what church songs have brought forth can also lend themselves exceptionally to what folksongs have to say...? That these two are *so well-abled together*—the church song and the noblest folk songs—should not come as a surprise in Grundtvig's fatherland.<sup>34</sup>

The deep connection between the Latin language and the melodies of Gregorian chant, as also the deep connection between Gregorian chant-inspired melodies and the Danish language in the folk songs, echoes Martin Luther's intuition about the interaction of language and music. The issue of their relationship is more subtle than a simple lining up of syllables and musical pitches. The text and the music live and develop together in unity, or in disunity the one or the other or both die. For this reason Laub opposed a simplified repristination of chant in the music of some (contrary to Luther's dictum) who were setting Danish words to Gregorian chant. Laub's deep attraction to Gregorian chant served as inspiration, not imitation.

History has taught us that the only song we can draw counsel from in regard to the liturgy is the Gregorian.... The greatest advantage with the old song certainly was that word and melody were one, that the melodies (and rhythms<sup>35</sup>) grew out of the Latin text. We shall learn now to lay our words, Danish, to be borne by the same manner of melodies. With insight into the old song we shall come to a course of action to discover which elements lend themselves to our use, to bring forth freely according to our language patterns a 'new creation' in the 'old spirit.'<sup>36</sup>

Laub did not envision a simple modern recreation of old music. His intent was that this old music continued to live through the folk song heritage, together

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<sup>34</sup> Laub, *Kirke og Musik*, p. 30.

<sup>35</sup> See Laub, *Kirke og Musik*, pp. 44ff; Laub provides an historical sketch of the fluid rhythm in Gregorian chant, as it flowed from the rhythm of the text. This provides the basis for the historical development of the rhythmic chorales of the Lutheran Reformation which likewise allow the language to dictate the musical rhythms. This is in sharp contrast to the enforced regularity of modern bar lines.

<sup>36</sup> Laub, *Kirke og Musik*, p. 168.



with a renewed use of Gregorian melodies and Latin texts in the Divine Service.

The old music also lived in the restored rhythmic chorales from the Reformation era.

Beyond this, the old music was to inspire new creations of chant-based melodies in the spirit of the old but in the expression of the new.



Figure 5 From Laub's *Kirke og Musik*, showing the proper musical notation to reflect the natural accents of the Danish syllables with the old rhythmic chorales. The second line shows a false accent to fit a common meter setting. The third and fourth lines show the proper setting, following the original at the top.

The theologian, Gustaf Aulén, carried the Gregorian chant renewal into the liturgical debates among Swedish Lutherans. Aulén, like Laub, recognized that if one were going to attempt to raise Gregorian chant from the dead among Lutherans, it should be for greater reasons than the purely aesthetic. Temptations toward aestheticism were strong in Aulén's day. Furious debates, continuing from the earlier Romantic Era, raged within the Swedish Church over what constituted "church-worthy music" [*kyrklig värdig musik*]. Aulén, in true Lutheran theological custom, proceeded to engage the debate in terms of Law and Gospel. He noted that to draw up guidelines which defined the worthiness of a piece of music for use in the



Divine Service of a congregation approached the subject from the perspective of the Law. The Law's dictatorship, however, "silences music."<sup>37</sup> Under the Law "church-worthy" music cannot be defined.

Aulén comes to that conclusion by demonstrating the futility of such efforts to define "church-worthiness". He provides a discussion of the "subjective" and the "objective" in music (as though "worthiness" were contingent upon the greater "objectivity" of a piece of music). He notes that historically there has been incredible confusion over the pair of terms, subjective-objective, especially in theological discussions.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, he notes, one immediately should be suspicious when the terms are introduced into discussions about church music. Their use had degenerated into stereotypical characterizations. Late Romantic music had come to be viewed as "subjective" in nature; or as Aulén preferred to call it, "subjectivist". At the same time the term "objective" had come to characterize music which was colorless, dry, impersonal, cold or indifferent; music that is not at all engaging.<sup>39</sup>

The Swedish theologian and musical scholar then took up a discussion of definitions in the light of the sources of music.

Is it possible that, for example, one may draw some clear line between 'churchly' and 'worldly' or 'profane' music...? It shall first be said that the question about what shall be regarded as 'churchly' or 'unchurchly' and 'profane' cannot be done by a reference to the source. A melody does not become church unworthy if it has a worldly origin. In the foregoing discussion we have seen that the Reformation era took up a not inconsequential number of so-called worldly melodies and incorporated them into the church's chorale

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<sup>37</sup> Gustaf Aulén, *Högmässans förnyelse liturgiskt och kyrkomusikaliskt* (Stockholm: Diakonistyrelsens Bokförlag, 1961), p. 226.

<sup>38</sup> Among Lutherans a confusing array of debates has circled around the terms "objective justification" and "subjective justification," often with more heat than light. Aulén himself surveyed their use in his classic study on the Atonement, *Christus Victor* (1931).

<sup>39</sup> Aulén, *Högmässans förnyelse*, p. 178.



treasure.... On the other hand that a melody has a 'religious' origin by no means guarantees that it should have a 'church-worthy' character. No one disputes that one finds an abundance of such melodies which—for example on the basis of their banality or pronounced sentimentality—do not possess a required worthiness.<sup>40</sup>

Aulén pushes the futility of a Law-defined church-worthiness to include the epitomizing of one specific era of church music as the style most worthy of use. He notes with deep admiration that the music of the early church, the Gregorian chant, is exquisite. The rhythmic chorales and polyphonic motets of the Reformation-era Church are without peer even after several centuries. The preservation of this music and cultivating its use within the worshiping congregation is essential. This music bears fundamental weight when considering what sort of music is truly worthy for use in the Church. Yet new music is not bound as by Law to a slavish imitation of that glorious old music.

One can go a step further and say: It [early music] is a source of power for continued church music renewal. It shows itself more and more inspiring for new music, the more intimate contact that is made with the church's classical music. Contact is not the same as imitation. Imitation is to the musical domain as it is to other arts, the creator of nothing new.<sup>41</sup>

Church music under the Law can only imitate at best. It may imitate the best of past music, but imitation is not living. Consequently, following Luther who insisted that what is *evangelium* progresses, Aulén maintains that church music's proper domain is to be seen in the light of the Gospel. "The Law silences music. The Gospel gives it life."<sup>42</sup> This is what Aulén, and with him the whole Church, learns by his study and resurrection (not a resuscitation) of Gregorian chant.

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<sup>40</sup> Aulén, *Högmässans förnyelse* p. 218.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.



For the early Christian Church it was not any problem whether [worship] should be united with music or not. Music's participation in the Divine Service was self-evident.... There is an inner compulsion, a spontaneous necessity for the worshiping congregation to sound prayers, confess and present all praise in melody's rich and diversified language. Singing is, first and last, a singing to God's ears, bearing thankfulness for His benefits.<sup>43</sup>

The old music lives in the present not by a legalistically defined veneration of the old, but rather because the Gospel is intimately woven together with the old music, performed in the present time. Furthermore, where the Gospel lives (enlivening old music), it will also live in new music, inspired by the Gospel-enlivened music of old.

Meanwhile in the Norwegian Church there were two composers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century who, among others, echoed the sentiments of the Dane, Carl Nielsen. New music grew out of the old. What words were insufficient to express, music would accomplish. Knut Nystedt (b. 1915) and Egil Hovland (b. 1924) have written music which, like Gregorian chant, flows with a life rhythm of text and melody woven tightly together as one.

Nystedt composes with a fascination for musical sonorities. One's initial reaction is that he exploits sound only for sound's sake. These masses of sound, of tone clusters and unpitched sound clusters, with which Nystedt composes, while not melodies in and of themselves, do have a movement to them within the composition. To Western ears accustomed to the regular three- and four-beat measures of music the inner rhythm of Nystedt's music is perceived as a lack of rhythm. In truth it is very much like the rhythm in plainsong—indeed, the simultaneity of order and freedom in the Lutheran aesthetic—where the rhythm of the text rather than a pre-

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<sup>43</sup> Aulén. *Högmässans förnyelse* p. 226.







Nystedt's ability in composing so "naturally" in the new music grew out of his familiarity with the "natural" music of the Gregorian chant.

Egil Hovland, a composer like Thomas Laub who combined writing music with writing about music, has played a significant role in Norwegian church music circles. Early in his composing career he developed an interest in Gregorian chant. While serving as a substitute organist in Glemmen he took an interest in the prayer offices of Matins and Vespers. By studying O. M. Sandvik's *Vesperale* he pondered how it would be possible to incorporate the music of Gregorian chant into the chief Divine Service. In 1951 Hovland published *Gregoriansk Musikk, op. 19*. In the foreword to the collection Hovland noted:

This little collection of Gregorian music is planned as an attempt to introduce some more of the old church's immortal melodies into the framework of our Divine Service. By dressing the Gregorian melodies in harmonic attire and furthermore by making use of them in an organ setting with four independent voices, this work sets one in a place to commit violence against the whole Gregorian style's characteristic physiognomy. But much stands and falls with the performance—one is bidden to avoid an overly metrical and square performance of the subject.<sup>45</sup>

During the decade of the 1960s Hovland introduced 12-tone serialism into church music, as well as elements of Neo-expressionist, aleatory composition and electronic music. While not free from criticism for "bringing the avant-garde into the House of God", Hovland was true to his own dictum that "tradition and renewal must go hand in hand." For during this time, further influencing his thought as a composer, Hovland decided to immerse himself in the world of Gregorian chant.

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<sup>45</sup> Egil Hovland; quoted in *Festskrift til Egil Hovland på 50-årsdagen* (Fredrikstad: C. Hanssens Trykkeri og Bokbinderi, 1974). p. 30.



The musical score is for a piece titled 'The Benedicamus' from Hovland's *Uppståndelsesmässa*, op. 60. It is composed for a SATB choir, a Förs. (First Voice), Tr. (Trumpet), Trb. (Trumpet/Bass), Org. I (Organ I), and Org. II (Organ II). The time signature is 4/4, and the tempo is marked as  $J = 80$ . The lyrics are 'Her - ren va - re tack och lov. Halle - lu - ja. Hal - le - lu - ja. Hal - le - lu - - - ja.' The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'Mix'. The score is divided into systems, with the first system containing the SATB choir and Förs. parts, and the subsequent systems containing the Tr., Trb., Org. I, and Org. II parts.

Figure 7 The *Benedicamus* from Hovland's *Uppståndelsesmässa*, op. 60, composed for the Lutheran mass on Easter, 1968, at the cathedral in Uppsala, Sweden.

He spent several weeks in a monastery to grasp both the chant as it was lived among the monks and also the cloistered life within which this Gregorian music lived. The creative outcome of this experience was a collection of 60 introits employing Gregorian melodies adapted to the rhythm of the Norwegian language, composed as one for each Sunday of the church year.

[Hovland] moved no melodies but adapted biblical texts. Another important feature of these collected introits, as they first became ready for publication in 1963, was that he attempted to state the most important rhythmic nuances by single sign in the musical text and by the extension of the note values. With these he attempted to allow



the Gregorian melodies to come in [to the Norwegian Church] with his mother tongue.<sup>46</sup>

While Hovland's music is not as daring in comparison to other Norwegian composers outside the church during the last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and while in the ears of many among the conservative element regarding matters of church music Hovland's works were startlingly new, it is not the newness of Hovland's music itself that makes it remarkable. For both Nystedt and Hovland, the new is but a living development from the old.

Tradition and renewal must go hand in hand. We must accept that we have such different assumptions for the experiencing and also the understanding of music. Therefore this state itself demands that we must have openness for critique and debate in connection with the different new and old music forms. Today's church music debate shows precisely that the demand regarding renewal and greater quality consciousness is fundamental.<sup>47</sup>

### *In Search of a New Metaphor—American Worship Wars*

Assessing the state of church music among Lutherans in the United States at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one highly regarded theologian and church musician lamented,

We live in a time...when the church has been engaged in power plays called 'worship wars' and 'music wars.' This game is named death. It is played by forcing people to choose between two sides, one labeled stuffiness and the other froth, as if those were the only possible choices.... The question in such a time is whether the song has to cease. The dilemma is whether the church has to fall silent in order to be true to its being.... Or is that approach a cop-out? Does

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<sup>46</sup> *Festskrift til Egil Hovland*, p. 39.

<sup>47</sup> Hovland in a 1974 interview, quoted in *Festskrift til Egil Hovland*, p. 80. Nystedt had said of his efforts: "We advance on the whole new Divine Service forms as can animate and actualize the Christian message in today's situation." Quoted in *Festskrift til Knut Nystedt*, p. 78.



dying with Christ mean staying the course right in the midst of the church's culturally driven, mean-spirited, and in-grown hatred?<sup>48</sup>

There are a multitude of influences which have brought the state of church music among American Lutherans to its present, conflicted point. The conflicts did not erupt overnight. Given the confluence of theological and cultural streams among the various Lutheran immigrant groups as these immigrant groups evolved into something identifiably American—for Lutheran church music has always lived in the context of a people—conflict has been unavoidable, though not always inevitable.

The primary source of the “worship wars” among Lutherans in the United States has been in the relationship of music to the liturgy of the Divine Service. A single liturgy among the many forms of liturgy which immigrant Lutherans brought with them to the United States began its progression toward unanimity with the patriarch among Lutherans in America, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. In a letter of November 4, 1783, only a few short years before his death, Muhlenberg wrote,

It would be a most delightful and advantageous thing if all the English Lutheran congregations in North America were united with one another, if they all used the same order of service.<sup>49</sup>

For Muhlenberg, the one liturgy-one church vision grew out of the common confession of the Gospel which all Lutherans made by subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, especially the Augsburg Confession. From a singularity in confession would come a singularity in worship would become a singularity of the church. It is the Lutheran way to confess the Church.

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<sup>48</sup> Paul Westermeyer, “Music: Poured Out for the World,” *Inside Out: Worship in an Age of Mission*, ed. Thomas H. Schattauer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), pp. 125-126.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), p. 182



Over time the unifying common confession of faith gave way to an enforced liturgical unanimity; unanimity more by the *lex* than by the *credendi*.<sup>50</sup> As a result the creative tension envisioned by Martin Luther of Christian freedom set together with Christian service—in perfect freedom obediently serving and in perfect obedience freely serving—fractured into periods of liturgical tyranny and liturgical anarchy with the concomitant damage to the confession of the faith within the Lutheran congregations.

Luther Reed, a seminal voice in the history and development of the Divine Service among American Lutherans, expressed his views on church music in stark clarity:

We must begin any discussion of music in the church today by considering the church's ideals. Only as we understand these can we establish standards by which to judge the music we have and the music we should have.... Church music is good or bad as it approximates within its possibilities the ideals of the church in this particular field. These ideals may be lofty and pure as those which the church upholds in every other department. Pure doctrine, pure life, pure worship must be the goal. Nothing less will do.<sup>51</sup>

Reed's purity is a purity of the law, of standards, of criteria, of rules. "Our doctrine must rule our liturgics; our liturgics must rule our music."<sup>52</sup> The order proceeds in one direction only: *lex credendi, lex orandi, lex cantandi*. It is *lex* which rules the domain. In the light of the cultural sentiment among many Americans that "our only tradition is to have no traditions" Reed's emphasis is understandably intense.

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<sup>50</sup> The liturgical dictum, *lex credendi, lex orandi* (the law or rule of belief, the law or rule of prayer): belief guides liturgy, while liturgy gives expression to belief. In Lutheran usage, while there is a reciprocal relationship between the pair of terms, greater emphasis is given to the *lex credendi*.

<sup>51</sup> Luther D. Reed, *Worship: A Study of Corporate Devotion* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 177.

<sup>52</sup> Reed, *Worship*, p. 178.



Reed's *lex*-centered church music can be detected as an undercurrent in so much of the fine, scholarly study in Lutheran church music circles during the years immediately following World War II. In August 1944, forty-eight Lutheran church musicians gathered at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana, to grapple with the challenges of preserving the rich heritage of the Lutheran Church. Lutheran Germany, the source of so much of the musical heritage among Lutherans, was in rubble. The war would soon be ending and plans had to be made how to rescue and rebuild the devastated culture.

In the opening address, Theodore Noelty-Nickel observed,

This is truly an historical occasion. We are assembled here this week to salvage our immortal musical heritage from the wreckage of the last quarter of a century. In close parallel with the world, we have engaged, particularly during the last twenty-five years, in a fatal process of whole or partial imitation of manners, styles and philosophies which are foreign to the spirit of the Reformation, of Luther and Bach, and of the glorious organization entrusted to us by the fathers of our Church.... In our day we so often hear the remark, 'Why must we go back to ancient sources for the church music of our present day? Does not each generation produce the new song suitable to its clime and conditions?' There are those who interpret Col. 3:16 in a literary sense, as if the term *new song* had any significance as to time. It can be readily shown that the meaning of *canticum novum* must be interpreted not as to the time of its origin but solely as to its content. There are some who demand church music which speaks the language of our day. But does our day actually have a 'language'...? The language of our time is, as at all, times of decadent culture, a multiplicity of languages, a Babylonian confusion of languages.<sup>53</sup>

From that opening address came several years of annual gatherings of church musicians and theologians from the United States and abroad, to revitalize, to dust off and recreate, to cultivate and to advance the rich heritage of music in the Lutheran Church of the past. In terms of scholarship and musical practice in church music, the annual seminars were unexcelled among Lutheran in the United States.

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<sup>53</sup> Theodore Noelty-Nickel, "Opening Address," *The Musical Heritage of the Church 1944* (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University, 1944), p. 5.



The complete works of notable Lutheran composers such as Johann Walter.

Michael Praetorius and Heinrich Schütz were published by an American-German cooperative effort. Because of this effort music which had been rarely heard in the United States was received with delight by Lutheran choirs and congregations.

Nevertheless, this remarkable effort in the field of early Lutheran music was not like that of the church music rebirth in Germany of the 1920s and 30s. The German church musicians studied the old to learn its concepts for new music. The American scholarly efforts were primarily in veneration of the old. It became a denial of the new.

By the sixth annual meeting of the *Valparaiso Church Music Seminar* in 1961, there were voices raising the concern about

our tendency toward over-veneration of our glorious past and our unfortunate discrimination against the present.... Having established such a superstructure (as I believe we have), and having reestablished contact with a valid artistic heritage, we must then also assume the proper perspective about that tradition... An awareness of tradition does not simply imply an antiquarian preoccupation with our musical past, or an imitation of past models in some pleasing form of archaeological reconstruction.... Our tradition, any tradition, is timeless, but the surface aspect by which this tradition is transmitted must be a constantly changing one.<sup>54</sup>

The voice of scholarship and music addressed itself briefly in passing about the contemporary scene as it was being developed among the contemporary composers of the avant-garde. Yet within those seminars on church music no reference was made to the musical trends of the late 1950s and the 1960s in the popular culture. Those ignored trends of popular culture would burst upon the Lutheran congregations of the 1960s, sending shock waves through them very much like the shock waves triggered by Titanic's iceberg.

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<sup>54</sup> Richard Hillert, "The Church Composer and the Contemporary Musical Scene," *The Musical Heritage of the Church*, Vol. 6 (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University, 1962), pp. 90-91.



The forces of American culture in the 1960s powerfully reacted against the imposed *lex* of “good music.” One church musician who knew personally both Luther Reed and the explosion of the 1960s observed,

The cover is off! Pandora’s box is open! The worship of the church will never be the same! Multimedia shows, jazz masses, rock songs, balloons and placards, ‘groovy’ language, ‘flicks,’ and changing lights are here...! The sweep is irresistible. Few congregations can maintain their composure. If one sends youth to conferences or conventions, they come back singing the new tunes and pressing for social change. If one relies on the old ladies to maintain the congregation’s sanity, he finds that they too dabble in folk masses at their conventions away from home. The only people who can remain pure are those who never go anywhere.... The moment for completely new forms caught the churches off guard. Most of us had been seeking forms and media that had universal appeal and that would bind us to the church-of-all-times. We had just opened ourselves for change in this direction. The discoveries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had given us a picture of times ‘when the liturgies were pure’.... But scarcely had we rediscovered these treasures than a new and fresh liturgical wind blew up. And opening our mouths to gulp in this new movement, based upon the actions of worship, we swallowed something else. Innovation of any kind seems to be proper now. One does ‘his own thing’...<sup>55</sup>

Like that writer, there have been many who, from the beginning of the “rock invasion” into the Lutheran Church of the United States, have been involved in the movement with thought and reflective insight, embracing the new without jettisoning the old. Still the nature of the culture shock of the 1960s and following was such that it aggressively attacked the old authorities and gave assent to viewpoints that directly contradicted the old.

This was especially true in church music. If the old music of the church was the primary source of quality, now only the latest creations were considered good music. If liturgy was once the fashion, now spontaneous, free-flowing services became the norm. If vestments and ceremonial were once accepted accoutrements,

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<sup>55</sup> Henry E. Horn. *Worship in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972). pp. 3-4.



now they would not be used at all. Whatever was once associated with church music, now was rejected outright because of that association. Everything needed to be new, now. The phenomenon of worship quickly became consumer oriented.<sup>56</sup>

The consequence of this revolution was that one *lex* replaced another. The liturgical *lex* was cast aside for a consumerist *lex*. The principles, rules and commandments of church music for “contemporary worship” were easily produced. Now music in the church should reflect the listening consumer tastes of the congregation members in their lives outside of worship. Classical music was still a possibility in the church, but only if the significant portion of the congregation’s membership preferred to listen to classical music in its everyday musical consumption. If the taste in consumption is Top 40s, then the Top 40s dictate that congregation’s church music; likewise, if country, then country, if salsa, then salsa, if hip hop, then hip hop. The rule of the consumer is the rule of church music; *lex consumpti, lex cantati*.

Some advocates of the new tendencies consciously made comparisons with the old Pietist era. There was a similar emphasis on simplicity in both eras. A “contemporary” chorus of one or two lines replaced a multi-stanza hymn. This made it possible for the singer to grasp immediately the sense of the text and while singing it over and over in repetition the simple cognitive act quickly became affective, feelingful experience (See *Fig. 8*, next page). The immediacy of such music was marked by an appealing attraction which placed no demands on the singer/listener.

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<sup>56</sup> For a thorough study of this phenomenon in American Protestantism, see Jeanne Halgren Kilde. *When Church Became Theatre: The Transformation of Evangelical Architecture and Worship in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). In a combination of “form following function” as well as “function following form” Kilde’s work bears significantly upon the history of the Lutheran Church in the United States and its flirtation with American Evangelicalism.





Figure 8 A popular contemporary praise chorus in the United States

Like Pietism of old, however, “contemporary worship” leads inevitably to a loss of the historic liturgy because the emphasis is on the now and not on the historically developed. One advocate of “going contemporary” takes pains to make a favorable comparison to Martin Luther’s *Deutsch Messe*. The author rightly records the abuse which liturgical scholars have heaped on Luther’s vernacular mass, but then perpetuates the abuse by misconstruing Luther’s *Deutsche Messe* as only a simple outline for a hymned service.<sup>57</sup> The polemics between the advocates of the tradition and the advocates of “going contemporary” are as vitriolic today as anything between the orthodox and pietistic Lutherans of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>57</sup> Richard S. Luecke, *The Other Story of Lutheran at Worship* (Tempe, Arizona: Fellowship Ministries, 1995), p. 84. Luecke unwittingly perpetuates the *Formula Missae* vs. *Deutsche Messe* fiction of the scholars he repudiates. Both of Luther’s worship reform efforts were more subtle than Luecke and his critics realize. For a thorough and appreciative assessment of Luther’s work see Bryan Spinks, *Luther’s Liturgical Criteria and his Reform of The Canon of the Mass* (Nottingham: Hassall & Lucking Ltd., 1982).



As the 20<sup>th</sup> century drew to an end and the emotional tumult of the years immediately following the 1960s had spent some of its fury, thoughtful church musicians and theologians again contemplated how the liturgical tradition and a high appreciation for the musical heritage of the church need not exclude the new styles of popular music. Nor does engagement with popular musical culture—in musical forms, instruments and melodic/harmonic techniques—necessitate the negation of all that has come before.

A significant philosophical approach to the issue of the traditional and the contemporary in church music has been developed with the help of the phenomenology of colors and games.

In reconstructing the church as a company of strangers engaged in an evangelical conversation and life on behalf of the world, we need a new strategy for liturgy that can link the public and private focus on the conversion and sustenance of its members. Such a strategy does not necessarily call for a new set of liturgical forms, any more than it dictates the repetition of traditional forms. It does require that Christians be both *ritually competent*, or capable of participating in rituals, and *ritually resourceful*, or capable of adapting them to a specific culture.<sup>58</sup>

Keifert then outlines how worship, and music within worship, is like the playing of games which may be sub-divided into games played at home and games played away somewhere. His suggestion is more subtle than the endless debates over the intended audience of the Divine Service, the regular worshiper or the guest.

The weakness of this model, one which the author recognizes, is that the strategies for play at home, with the complex range of sensations which the regular worshiper has learned over time, and the strategies for play away from home, with guests who have little or no sense of worshiping the Divine, are so very different that two separate experiences will be needed to play the two games.

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<sup>58</sup> Patrick R. Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1992). p. 96.



To resolve the conflicts experienced by the early church, contemporary planners might likewise develop at-home and away strategies, using two separate services to respond to these differing demands for public worship. They both could be played every Sunday, for example, but they would be played by different ‘teams.’ The at-home strategy would follow the wisdom of the house-church tradition, taking account of centuries of subsequent developments of the service of Holy Communion. The away strategy would follow the wisdom of the itinerant preachers’ liturgies.<sup>59</sup>

The musical score is for a chorus by Jacques Berthier from the Taizé Community, 1978. It is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The score is divided into two main sections: 'Congregation' and 'Verses'. The 'Congregation' section consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The treble staff has a melodic line with a circled 'A' at the beginning and a circled 'B' later. The bass staff has a supporting line. The lyrics 'A - do - ra - mus te Do - mi - ne.' are written below the staves. The 'Verses' section consists of two staves, treble clef. The first staff has a melodic line with a circled 'B' at the beginning and a circled 'A' later. The lyrics '1 With the an - gels and arch - an - gels:' are written below the staff. The second staff has a melodic line with a circled 'B' at the beginning and a circled 'A' later. The lyrics '2 With the pa - tri - archs and proph - ets:' are written below the staff.

Figure 9 From the music of the Taizé Community, 1978, a chorus by Jacques Berthier employing Latin for the congregation while the cantor/choir adds the verses. This blending of tradition with the contemporary has also found a ready audience in the United States and elsewhere.

The negative consequence of offering different styles of worship—commonly identified as traditional, contemporary and blended (a little of both)—each at its own time on a Sunday morning is that it reinforces the “have it your way” of consumerism while minimizing the “one faith, one fellowship” nature of the Church.

<sup>59</sup> Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger*, p. 98. The task, Keifert notes, is to link these two strategies so as not to produce two separate congregations. See pp. 100ff. A catechumenate is his suggested solution. Keifert is insightful enough to recognize that the catechumenate should include more than Biblical/doctrinal instruction. Ritual formation is also included in his design. This ritual instruction aids *mystagogia*, a deepening awareness of the mystery of faith. Still Keifert woefully underestimates the role of music in every aspect of the catechumenate. His differentiation of “games” at home and away portrays music in static terms, overlooking the true nature of music and its role in cognitively teaching the faith (one thinks of Martin Luther’s catechism hymns) and affectively teaching the faith, expanding the catechumen’s range of musical/aesthetic expression in church music with a concomitant deepening of an awareness of the mystery of faith.



A greater consequence of Kiefert's "games at home and games away" approach is the diminishment of the creative Word. In Kiefert's scheme the setting dictates the form of the musical Word. In truth, the musical Word creates its own setting, its own "game."

The typology that was outlined in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century by Richard Niebuhr in his book, *Christ and Culture*,<sup>60</sup> has provided new insights in recent time to consider again the nature of church music among Lutherans. The "Christ of culture" motif is reflected in the consumerist approach to church music, a paradigm adapted by proponents of "Church Growth" or "Entertainment Evangelism."<sup>61</sup> To know Christ is to know the popular culture; to know the popular culture is to know Christ. There is little if any thought given to the music used in the worship of the congregation except whether it is the music the people consume from radio, television or personal listening.

The "Christ against culture" is reflected in the severe form of liturgical posturing that will allow nothing of popular culture to infect the Divine Service. The culture of the church is a wholly different, wholly separate culture from that outside the church. All music within the Divine Service must be uniquely church music which clearly denotes that popular culture has been left outside the Divine Service.

Of the three mediating positions in Niebuhr's paradigm, it is the "Christ and culture in paradox" that most nearly reflects the Lutheran ethos.

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<sup>60</sup> See H. Richard Niebuhr. *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951).

<sup>61</sup> The most candid embrace of the concept of "entertainment evangelism" may be found in Walt Kallestad, *Entertainment Evangelism: Taking the Church Public* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996). See also David S. Luecke, *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988). Luecke's Tillichian approach to worship and music, naively assuming that style is a neutral element, fails to grasp the fullness of Christology in church music—popular, folk or classical.



For those who see Christ and culture in paradox there is no possibility either of a wholesale embrace of the culture or a wholesale rejection of it, because it is fully sin-soaked and yet the object of God's grace. Like Luther, they know about the possibility of perverting the gift of music with 'erotic rantings,' and, also like Luther, they regard music as one of God's greatest gifts, which is to be used with gratitude from any source—as long as well-crafted and durable creations result. Today, however, they do not have Luther's luxury. Luther could carve out a setting of Psalm 46 or Psalm 130 from the hardy quarry of German folk song, but to attempt the same thing in our commercial culture from the idiom of a Coca-Cola or Honda jingle or a popular song is quite a different thing.<sup>62</sup>

Westermeyer rightly criticizes the egregious example of combining the tunes of popular commercial jingles with often-vacuous religious lyrics; a favorite technique in certain "culture friendly" Lutheran circles, undertaken with a mistaken appeal that Martin Luther did something comparable. However, Westermeyer fails to identify examples from the American folk song tradition which, in spirit, have a similar integrity to the *Volklieder* available to Luther.

This folk song tradition, in addition to its powerful influence on American popular music, has heavily influenced American Lutheran choral repertoire in recent years, as well as contemporary hymnody. This influence, entirely sympathetic to the Lutheran aesthetic in music, has not received as much rigorous theological reflection and creative engagement as it has received intense criticism. Furthermore, in contrast to Lutheran church music in Europe which, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been more significantly influenced by serialism and minimalism as well as by the continuing impact of ethnic folk music than have Lutherans in the United States, American theologians and church musicians have expended greater energy in establishing principles for the "worship wars" than in expanding the horizon of musical expression in the American setting.

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<sup>62</sup> Paul Westermeyer, "The Present State of Church Music: Historical and Theological Reflections", *Word & World* XII, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 217.



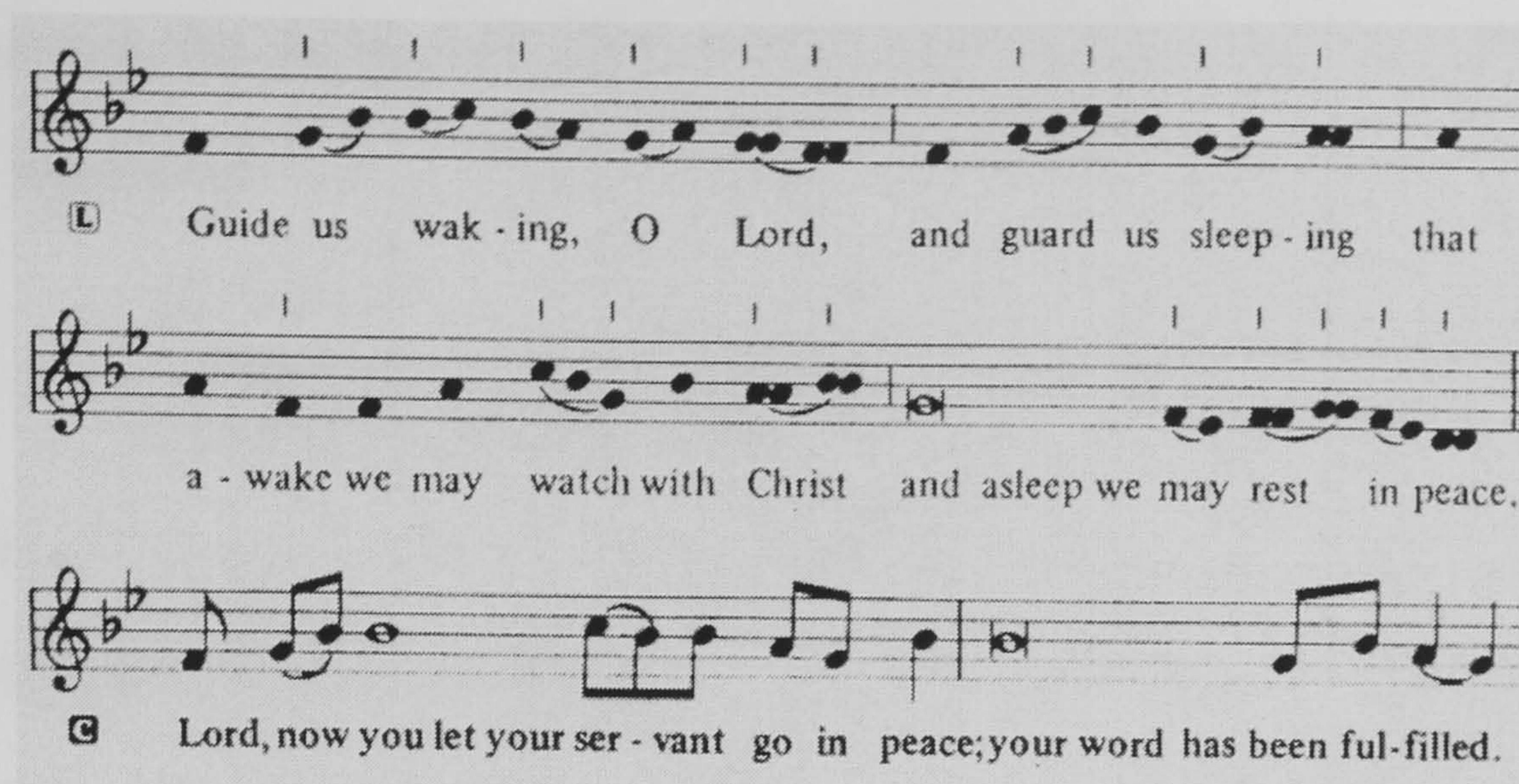


Figure 10 From the Order of Compline in *Lutheran Worship* (1982) using modified Gregorian chant coupled with an English text

Still, having established the “Christ and culture in paradox” interpretation, Westermeyer rightly sees that the trend at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century into the 21<sup>st</sup> century is toward developing the creativity of church music within the paradoxical terms of a music “in but not of the world.” Given the frequent paradoxical nature of Lutheran Christology and the rich Lutheran musical tradition that does not draw a sharp line between the *Verbum musicum* inside and outside the Divine Service, this effort provides the richest possibilities at the present time.

Westermeyer, following up on his Amos-like lament noted at the beginning of this section, suggests pairs of words to define the musical task for the creative church musician. Westermeyer, however, misses the opportunity to develop these pairs as they are embodied in Christ the Word whose three-fold Office of Prophet, Priest and King is likewise embodied in the Office of the Holy Ministry in which the musician shares. Thus instead of prescriptive principles, *lex*, which constrict the Lutheran aesthetic in music, in a Christological setting his word pairs would become descriptive of the Lutheran aesthetic in music (its proportion and *harmonia*, as the earlier Lutherans would say) as that is formed and informed by the Gospel,



*evangelium*, the sharing in the divine Christ who inhabits it. Westermeyer lists four word pairs.<sup>63</sup>

1. The *old* and *new*. The old helps us keep pace with our sisters and brothers who have sung before us...the new helps us live into our time with its melodies and rhythms.

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century Lutheran musicians discovered again, the music of the past serves as both witness to the faith of the past and as inspiration for the present. It is in union with Christ, who makes all things new by His resurrection, that old and new in music live in creative tension now in time.

2. The *local* and the *catholic*. The local, what comes from our own community, helps us sing in the language of our people. The catholic helps us hear that the faith extends beyond us.... The terms *ethnic* and *multicultural* could be used here, so long as they are not turned into useless shibboleths.

As the fullness of Deity dwells in the locality of the man, Jesus, Westermeyer's terms, "local" and "catholic," find their meaning dwelling in Christ. Without the participation of the musician in the Office of the cosmic Christ who is located in the preached Word, the administered Sacraments, the gathered congregation, this word pair becomes an issue of quantity rather than communication. The Lutheran aesthetic in music does not decide *a priori* which musical expressions are catholic or local. This paper has focused on the development of the Lutheran aesthetic in the music of northern Europe and the United States, but the inclusiveness of Christ, the Savior of all people, ensures that the Christological dimension of the Lutheran aesthetic will embrace the music of other world cultures, discovering the new within that world music, while also communicating the rich tradition of Lutheran music to that local culture.

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<sup>63</sup> Westermeyer, *Inside Out*, pp. 140-141.



3. The *simplest* as well as the most *complex*.... An enormous range of music is available to fit all our various capacities and to reflect the richness of the faith. Another way of stating this is to affirm both folk song and high art.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the simplest, clearest expression of the grace of God toward His creation. Yet one may ponder that Gospel for a lifetime and not plumb “the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.”<sup>64</sup> As Christ in His Prophetic Office proclaims this simple yet profound grace, so the musician who participates in that Office will compose music that is so accessible a child can hear it and music that takes time and experience to plumb the length and breadth and height and depth of its musical sound, whether in time or in eternity.

4. The *priestly* and the *prophetic*. God comforts and afflicts, consoles and judges. The words and music of the faith need to reflect that reality.

Since what Christ commands and promises by His Prophetic Office, He bestows by His Priestly Office, and then orders in His Regal Office, the *Verbum musicum* proclaims and bestows, and in that proclaimed bestowal of the gifts of God in Christ Jesus, the music orders, not by Law, but by the Gospel proclaimed and bestowed.

A renowned church historian, Jaroslav Pelikan, has captured what many of the American “worship war” protagonists have missed.

The Holy is not, first of all, a highest Good, a sublimely True, an ultimately Beautiful. Yet that Holy which men have vainly tried to grasp with their systems of thought, their categories of ethics, and their depictions of beauty; that Holy which has eluded every human attempt to take it captive and to tame it; that Holy which is not the answer to every riddle but itself the enigma in every riddle—that Holy has been made flesh and has dwelt among us in Jesus Christ.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Romans 11:33

<sup>65</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *Fools for Christ: Essays on the True, the Good, and the Beautiful*, 1955, reprinted (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), p. 171.



# Part Two

## *Toward a Christological Aesthetic in Lutheran Music*

*Where there is devotional music,  
God with His grace is always present.*  
— Johann Sebastian Bach



## Chapter 6 *The Incarnation and Musical Form*

*Music I have always loved. He who knows music has a good nature.* – Martin Luther

A Lutheran aesthetic will be thoroughly Christological. *Was Christi treibt* becomes the expression for an aesthetic in music as it expresses all Lutheran doctrinal formulation.<sup>1</sup> This Christological center locates the focus of aesthetics outside the human being. The dynamic runs from Christ to the Christian through aesthetic experience, and secondly as a consequence, the human being may respond to Christ through aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience becomes a means of setting forth Christ and of His making Himself known. As a result of this, the aesthetic experience then becomes a grace-enabled response by which the human being gives expression to this knowledge of Christ.

At once the question arises, how is this possible? The answer to this question will follow in the four short chapters of Part Two. These chapters will bring together the Christological elements implied and expressed in the chapters of the historical survey in Part One. In this and in each of the following chapters key elements of Christology will be outlined briefly before drawing conclusions concerning the musical implications of this Christology. It is my intent that in the light of the historical survey of Part One the Christology of Part Two will begin to induce for the reader the conclusions explicated at the end of each of the chapters in Part Two.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 14-16," *Luther's Works, Vol. 24* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 48.



The first response to the question “How is the Lutheran aesthetic possible?” comes in this chapter on the Incarnation. “The Word became flesh” carries implications for a Christological aesthetic. Aesthetic experience belongs to the human, but with the Incarnation aesthetic experience is shared by the Divine. It becomes a Christological aesthetic experience. The finite *is* capable of the infinite.<sup>2</sup>

*The Hidden God—Deus Absconditus*

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory...” With the Incarnation the hidden becomes revealed, the unknown becomes known, the inexpressible becomes capable of human expression. Taking a cue from the Johannine allusion to the opening chapter of Genesis, the Incarnation is the giving of earthly form to that which, from an earthly/human perspective, is formless. With earthly form the Incarnate Word creates the capacity for divine aesthetic expression through earthly form.

In the well-known passage of John 1:14, the Word which becomes flesh “dwells.” The particular word for “dwell” is ἐσκήνωσεν. It is a word which implies more than a state of being. “Dwell,” as used here in John 1, also includes the form for the state of dwelling. It is “dwell” by the means of the making of a dwelling, by the pitching of a tent (σκηνή).<sup>3</sup>

The use of σκηνή provides an additional Johannine allusion to the Old Testament. In Exodus 25:8-9 God commands Israel to make a σκηνή, a tent, according

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, “Lectures on Genesis,” *Luther's Works, Vol. 2* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> See Colin Brown, ed., *Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 3* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p. 811.



to the form (παράδειγμα) He reveals. This tent will be the dwelling place for God among the people of Israel. Furthermore, this tent will be the dwelling place for God's glory—a σκηνή for His ἁγιασμός, or with the two words combined in the Hebrew, שֹׁכֵן (*shkn*).<sup>4</sup>

Where God dwells, He dwells with His glory; where His glory dwells, there He dwells. The tent of meeting became the place of God's localized presence on earth. It was in the tabernacle that Moses would meet with God. It was in the tabernacle that Aaron, the high priest, together with the other priests and Levites, would conduct the prescribed ceremonies and sacrifices before the presence of God. When the cloud of God's glory lifted from the tabernacle, Israel would follow the cloud, moving the tabernacle to the place where the cloud of glory would set down. There at an earthly place glory and form would be joined again. Thus God and His glory were always united with the form in which God and His glory dwelt.

By this Old Testament allusion, centered in the word σκηνή, John's Gospel draws the typology to Jesus, who is God with His glory "tenting" in human flesh. "We have seen His glory." This "seeing of glory" is tied together with the "tent" of that glory, namely, the flesh of Jesus. As Israel saw the glory of God only in conjunction with the form of the tabernacle, so it is only in seeing the form of the Word made flesh, the human being Jesus, that one sees the glory of God. God and His glory are not separate from the "tabernacle," the flesh of Jesus.

While John alludes to the form of the tabernacle, the apostle Paul makes use of a different form: "face," πρόσωπον. Writing in his second epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle declares, "For God...made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light

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<sup>4</sup> שֹׁכֵן (*shākan*), to dwell; שֹׁכֵן (*shēken*), a dwelling; also *mishkān*, the tabernacle.



of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”<sup>5</sup> “The glory of God” is seen in the form of the προσώπω Χριστοῦ, “the face of Christ.”

This “face” language builds upon the apostle’s discussion of revealed glory in the preceding third chapter of II Corinthians. In that chapter Paul compares the fading glory in Moses’ face with the ever-increasing glory revealed in the Christian’s “face.” “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”<sup>6</sup> “In Christ” the Christian becomes “like Christ,” the dwelling place of God’s glory, revealed through the form, πρόσωπον. The nature of the Christian’s union with Christ will be taken up at a later point. Suffice it here to emphasize the form, because the glory of God dwells in earthly form.

One further reference is important. In the Colossian epistle Paul uses the word εἰκών in reference to Jesus the incarnate Christ. “He is the image (εἰκών) of the invisible God.”<sup>7</sup> Later in that same chapter Paul writes, “For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell (κατοικήσαι) in Him...”<sup>8</sup> Clearly Paul’s use of “dwell” does not carry the identical allusion as John’s tabernacle dwelling (σκηνή), nevertheless, this verb in Colossians does carry the implication of form, οἶκος, a “house” as the dwelling for God’s fullness. Jesus, the incarnate Christ, is thus both the “image” and the “house” of God’s fullness (πλήρωμα).

The foregoing discussion makes clear the indispensability of form in the Incarnation. The presence of God upon earth is a located presence, located in the ante-

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<sup>5</sup> II Corinthians 4:6

<sup>6</sup> II Corinthians 3:18

<sup>7</sup> Colossians 1:15

<sup>8</sup> Colossians 1:19



type of the σκηνή/tent/tabernacle of Israel and located in the fulfillment of the σκηνή/tent/tabernacle, Jesus. Likewise, the Word is a located Word; located in the εἰκών/image of the man, Jesus. This locatedness in form encompasses the fullness of God, the fullness of the Word who is with God and who is God.<sup>9</sup> Setting the basis for Lutheran theology, Luther recognized that:

The humanity of Christ is for us the holy ladder by which we ascend to knowledge of God...Whoever would rise wholesomely to the love and knowledge of God, must abandon human and speculative rules for knowing the divine and must first exercise himself in the humanity of Christ.<sup>10</sup>

This is a knowledge of God from the left side, for from the law one knows that a God exists, but He is a God who turns his back on us; therefore turn yourself round and see what is the true face of God, or what is his will. For it is only in Christ that he is truly seen...<sup>11</sup>

That the Word becomes flesh is significant for the role of form in the earthly life of the eternal Word. More must now be said concerning the relationship of the Word to its flesh-form. Is the flesh merely a shell or does the σκηνή/οἶκος/προσώπον/εἰκών take on new meaning since the fullness of God has dwelt within it? The following discussion will show that the form does become significant with the indwelling of the Word, the fullness of God.

### *The Communication of Attributes*

“The traditional Lutheran presentation of the communication of attributes has always been a useful device for understanding the consequences of the Personal

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<sup>9</sup> John 1

<sup>10</sup> Martin Luther, cited in Marc Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), p. 65.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Luther; *Ibid.*, p. 267, note 28.



Union.”<sup>12</sup> One of the consequences of the personal union (the divine nature and the human nature in Jesus) is a Lutheran aesthetic as this paper is making clear. Such a consequence, however, is built upon preceding consequences of the personal union, the first of which is the communication of attributes (*communicatio idiomatum*) itself.

Briefly stated, the Lutheran doctrine of the communication of attributes is that, because in the one person, Jesus, there is both a divine nature and a human nature, the attributes which belong essentially to each nature are ascribed to the whole person Jesus. The human nature did not assume the divine, nor did man assume God, nor did the divine person assume a human person; but the divine nature of the λόγος, or the person of the Son of God, subsisting from eternity in the divine nature, assumed in the fullness of time a certain mass of human nature, so that in Christ there is an assuming nature, viz., the divine, and an assumed nature, viz., the human.<sup>13</sup>

The state of the union is properly and specifically called union, hypostatic union, and is the most intimate περικώρησις, or unmixed and unconfused perversion in one person of two distinct natures, mutually present in the highest degree to each other, because of which one nature is not outside of the other, neither can it be without impairing the unity of the person.<sup>14</sup>

For the purpose of the topic at hand the doctrine of the communication of attributes means that it is not possible to isolate the attributes of one nature (divine or human) without ascribing them to the whole person of the Word made flesh, the fullness of God housed in human form. This consequence of the personal union may be taken so far as to say that in the one person, Jesus, that which belongs to His divine nature participates with His human nature, and that which belongs to His human nature participates with His divine nature.

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<sup>12</sup> David Scaer. *Christology, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics, Vol. XII*. (Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1989). p. 55.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Chemnitz. *De Duabus Naturis* (1570). 23; See Martin Chemnitz. *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), p. 76.

<sup>14</sup> John Gerhard. *Loci Theologici*. III. 412; Quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, p. 306.



This *communicatio idiomatum* can be further divided into three *genera* each of which emphasizes one aspect of the *communicatio*: 1) the *genus idiomaticum* which holds that the attributes belonging to each nature are ascribed to the whole person, Christ; 2) the *genus maiestaticum* which holds that the attributes of the divine nature are shared by the flesh of Jesus; and 3) the *genus apotelesmaticum* which holds that all the acts of Christ's Office are performed according to both natures.

A fourth *genus*, the *genus tapeinotikon*, holds that the attributes of the human nature are shared by the divine nature in Christ. While not held by the classical Lutheran dogmaticians, this fourth *genus* provided Luther—and still provides some modern theologians—a full understanding of the communication of attributes between the divine and human natures in Jesus. Of these *genera* two will be highlighted in the next chapters of this Part Two. They are the *genus tapeinotikon* (Chapter 7) in which the divine nature participates in the weakness of the human nature in Jesus (most specifically in the Crucifixion) and the *genus maiestaticum* (Chapter 8) in which the human nature participates in the glory of the divine nature in Jesus (most specifically in the Resurrection).

There is a sharing of natures in the union of the eternal Word and its human form, the flesh of Jesus; not by confusing the attributes of the two natures but by the unity of divine and human in the one person Jesus. Through the dwelling of the fullness of God in the human image of Jesus, there is a mutual sharing of that which belongs essentially to each nature—the fleshly “tent” and the fullness of God.

What does this mean? The form (tent, house, image, face) is no longer merely form but form interpenetrated (*perichoresis*) with the Divine.<sup>15</sup> Nor is the Word, the

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ*, p. 267, note 28.



fullness of God, solely Divine, but in a complementary manner is interpenetrating the form of flesh. The revealed form of human flesh and the hidden fullness of God are apprehended together in Jesus, neither the one without the other. To know the form is to know the fullness inhabiting the form. To know the Word is to know the flesh in which the Word dwells. The two are not divided nor are they blurred.

It is not a *communicatio* κατὰ μέθεξιν, or according to the essence, by which one passes into the essence and within the definition of the other; but a *communicatio* κατὰ συδύασιν (not essential or accidental, but) personal, *i.e.*, a participation of the two natures, whereby one of those united is so connected with the other that, the essence remaining distinct, the one, without mingling, truly receives and partakes of the peculiar nature, power, and efficacy of the other.<sup>16</sup>

The consequence for form of this communication of attributes in the personal union of Jesus can be seen further in the Lutheran doctrine concerning the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. In a related way it may also be seen in the Preaching Office.<sup>17</sup>

Lutheran theology, following Augustinian tradition, speaks of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as the union of outward sign and Word. *Accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*.<sup>18</sup> Yet, in leaving behind Augustinian thought, Lutheran doctrine recognizes that in these Sacraments the outward form is no longer merely the outward sign of an inner grace, but it is what the Word declares and bestows. The water of the Sacrament of Baptism is not merely the outward sign, but it is a living water, rich in

<sup>16</sup> John Andrew Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* (1685), III, 102; Quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 322.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Augsburg Confession* V; *Formula of Concord, Epitome/Solid Declaration* VII; *Smalcald Articles, Part III*, IV-VII.

<sup>18</sup> *Large Catechism, The Sacrament of the Altar*, 10. The Latin quote is from Augustine. "When the Word is joined to the external element, it becomes a sacrament." (*Tractate 80* on John 15:3). Luther, who frequently quoted this passage, said of it, "This saying of St. Augustine is so appropriate and well put that he could hardly have said anything better." *Large Catechism, The Sacrament of the Altar*, 10.



grace, and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup> The bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper is no longer merely the outward sign, but it is the bodily presence of Christ, neither mixing the presence with the form as in the doctrines of transubstantiation or consubstantiation, nor in the isolating of the form from the presence in a spiritual eating and drinking.<sup>20</sup> The Lutheran Confessions declare concerning the Lord's Supper that:

For as in Christ two distinct and untransformed natures are indivisibly united, so in the Holy Supper the two essences [*substantiae*], the natural bread and the true, natural body of Christ, are present together here on earth in the ordered action of the sacrament...<sup>21</sup>

The communication of attributes between the two natures in the one person Jesus means that the form comprehended by the human senses is more than mere form. It is a living form, a form rich in grace, a form which effects that which the inhabiting Word declares. "This is my body.... This is My blood...for you."<sup>22</sup>

Similarly in the Preaching Office (*Predigtamt*) the form is enlivened by the presence of the "image" of the fullness of God, Jesus, within the Office. "He who hears you hears Me."<sup>23</sup> According to this promise the Preaching Office is not a disembodied Office. It has the form of the human being who holds the Office. Thus preaching must have both the Word of promise and the human form.

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<sup>19</sup> *Small Catechism*, IV 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Formula of Concord, Epitome* VII 22, 26, 32.

<sup>21</sup> *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration* VII 37; This passage has been cited often by non-Lutherans as evidence that Lutherans teach a doctrine of *consubstantiation*. Lutheran theologians, however, have been careful to avoid *consubstantiation* as an explication of their teaching, preferring not to speculate about the manner in which the *substantiae* coexist. Nicholas Selnecker, one of the authors of the *Formula of Concord*, has noted strongly, "Although our churches use the old expressions 'in the bread' or 'with the bread' or 'under the bread'...they do not teach an *inclusio*, *consubstantiatio* or *delitescencia*. The meaning is rather that Christ, 'when giving the bread, gives us simultaneously His body to eat...' " *Vom hl. Abendmahl des Herrn* (1591).

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 26:26-28

<sup>23</sup> Luke 10:16



Furthermore, in the Preaching Office it is the very word spoken by the preacher (*Prediger*) holding the Office (*Amt*) which provides the form in which the Word made flesh, Jesus, speaks to the listener. From the preacher's mouth into the ear of the listener, the form of words is indwelt with the fullness of God.<sup>24</sup>

It should be clear that form is essential to Christology; the God we know is the God revealed in the flesh of Jesus Christ. Form is essential to Christian faith; the Jesus we meet is the Jesus mediated through the Word and the Sacraments. Nevertheless such essential form does not stand alone in isolation. Form, indwelt by the fullness of God, exists in the dynamic state of the giving and the receiving of the Word-inhabited form.

Thus the form of water/Word called Holy Baptism is given and received in the action of the washing. The form of bread and wine/Word called Holy Communion is given and received from the hand of the celebrant to the mouth of the communicant in the action of the eating and the drinking. The form of words/Word called Holy Absolution is given and received from the mouth of the preacher to the ear of the listener in the action of preaching.

This essential Word-inhabited form—whether the epitome of the Word made flesh in Jesus, or the consequentials of the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar, plus the Preaching Office—reveals a dynamic effect at work. “Thus is My Word that goes out from My mouth: It shall not return to Me empty, but will

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<sup>24</sup> “Would to God that we could gradually train our hearts to believe that the preacher's words are God's Word and that the man addressing us is a scholar and a king. As a matter of fact, it is not an angel or a hundred thousand angels but the Divine Majesty Himself that is preaching there. To be sure, I do not hear this with my ears or see it with my eyes: all I hear is the voice of the preacher, or of my brother or father, and I behold only a man before me. But I view the picture correctly if I add that the voice and words of father or pastor are not his own words and doctrine but those of our Lord and God.” Martin Luther. “Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 1-4.” *Luther's Works*, Vol. 22 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957). p. 526.



accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”<sup>25</sup>

### *Musical Form*

With the Incarnation plus the dominical forms of the Sacraments and the Preaching Office there is an analogy for the use of earthly form as God participates in human life and, subsequently, as human beings participate in divine life.<sup>26</sup> Can this precedent be applied to musical form? Indeed it has scriptural warrant.

II Chronicles 5 records a portion of the dedication of Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem.

The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: ‘He is good; His love endures forever.’ Then the temple of the LORD was filled with a cloud...for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God.<sup>27</sup>

Here the form of music is joined with the previously discussed form of the temple indwelt by the glory of God. In this passage the fullness of divine glory dwells in the form of temple music as it does in the form of the temple structure. There is a messianic implication here in musical form because the temple (and its ritual) is a foreshadowing of the Incarnation. The temple was the place where God put His Name until the fullness of time when the Name of God took on human flesh and blood and “templed” in Jesus.

The messianic psalm, Psalm 22, carries the same context of musical form, like

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<sup>25</sup> Isaiah 55:11

<sup>26</sup> “We must hold firmly to the conviction that God gives no one his Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word which comes before.” *Smalcald Articles, Part III*, VIII 3; “We should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament.” *Smalcald Articles, Part III*, VIII 10.

<sup>27</sup> II Chronicles 5:13-14



the temple form, becoming the dwelling place of God. In Psalm 22:3(4) there is the verb,  $\text{יָשָׁב}$  (*yāshab*) ( $\kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\iota\kappa\epsilon\tilde{\iota}$  in *LXX*), to dwell. “But You are the Holy One, dwelling (*yāshab*) in the praises of Israel.” Given the intimate type/fulfillment bond between the temple as the dwelling place of God and the flesh of Jesus as the dwelling place of God, that the form of music called praise should likewise be considered as a dwelling place for God is Christologically significant.

Beyond the scriptural precedent of musical form as a dwelling place for God, it has been the thesis of this paper (an interpretation overlooked by Lutheran theologians) that the doctrine of the communication of attributes (*communicatio idiomatum*) clearly impacts the divinely inhabited musical form. I suggest that this new understanding of music in the fullness of Christology, rather than in the tedious debates concerning *adiaphora*, treats music with a theological integrity commensurate with the artistic integrity which has been long-recognized by Lutherans.

The Christological doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* informs the musical aesthetic at the same time as it informs the interpretation of Scripture. For instance, consider the verse from Psalm 22 quoted above. Some hold the position that the verb *yāshab* is never used of the Lord “dwelling” on earth or in any appearance of the Lord to Israel. According to this position, the verb *shākan* and its derivatives are reserved for any concept of the immanence of God.<sup>28</sup> As a rule this line of reasoning posits a separation of the earthly from the heavenly because “the finite is not capable of the infinite.” According to this reasoning, the Lord can dwell (*shākan*) only in glory and not in any lowly or hidden way such as the ordinary verb *yāshab* might imply. The

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. R. Laird Harris, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1980), p. 411.



Lutheran doctrine of the communication of attributes does not support such an interpretation. Furthermore, such an interpretation diminishes the messianic nature of Psalm 22, with its portrayal of suffering fulfilled in Jesus' crucifixion.

As in the personal union in Christ, each nature retains its idiomatic attributes (*genus idiomaticum*), so likewise with the musical form inhabited with the fullness of glory. Musical form retains all of its attributes as music even though inhabited by the glory of God and participating in that glory (*genus maiestaticum*). Conversely, the divine attributes remain fully intact, suffering no diminishment or loss, even though inhabiting musical form and participating in that form (*genus tapeinotikon*). The thesis of this paper has been that communication of these attributes extends so far that there is a sharing of attributes between the indwelling Word and the musical form, while neither confusing nor isolating the attributes.

The implications of this sharing of attributes can be heard (*analogia entis*) in the aesthetic experience of the Word-indwelt musical form. Luther heard it in the affects of the church modes and in the polyphony of *cantus firmus* motets. Praetorius heard it in the *harmonia* of form and musical sound. Schütz heard it in the new compositions he fashioned from German and Italian influences, while 20<sup>th</sup> century Pepping heard it in the combination of the ancient and the avant-garde in music. Mendelssohn, Brahms, indeed all the musicians of Part One heard it.

When attempts were made to regiment musical form in any era, however, the *communicatio* was silenced. One cannot begin with an arbitrary ideal form and thereby expect a *communicatio idiomatum* in the aesthetic experience. It is Christ the in-dwelling Word who endows musical form with its *communicatio*. No musical form is established *a priori* as capable of such communication. Yet, *a posteriori*, some



musical forms are heard to be more fully communicative than others.

It will fall to the remaining chapters of this Part Two to explicate how, as in the Sacraments and the Preaching Office there is a giving and receiving of Word-indwelt form because of the Incarnation, as there is also a giving/receiving dynamic at work in musical form as the εἰκών of God. For musical form inhabited by God to be Christologically considered beyond the precedents set in Psalm 22 and II Chronicles 5, and further developed in the doctrine of the communication of attributes, it is the giving and the receiving of the musical form to which attention now must be focused.

There remains also a question of particularity to be answered. Why is one particular form, the man Jesus, Word-inhabited in a way different from all other human beings? Why is one particular form of water, of bread and wine, of spoken words inhabited by the bodily fullness of God in Christ in a way different from other earthly forms of water, bread and wine, and words?

Consequently, how does this particularity impact musical form, and the giving and the receiving of musical form? Is there a difference among musical forms? Is there a difference in the manner of the giving and the receiving of musical forms? Is there yet something more that distinguishes the particular from the universal concerning musical form that in a Christological context?

The answer to these related questions will be found in following the line that has been followed throughout this thesis. One begins with Christ, *Was Christi treibt*, and then proceeds from there.



## Chapter 7 *The Cross and the Composer*

*I am not satisfied with him who despises music, as all the fanatics do;  
for music is an endowment and gift of God, not a human gift. – Martin Luther*

“To know Christ means to know His benefits.”<sup>1</sup> Philip Melanchthon’s dictum emphasizes the full participation of Christ Jesus in, with and under His gifts. There is a certainty in the gifts, the benefits, because of the One who has given the gifts and participates in them. Thus, it is also true, to know Christ’s benefits means to know Him.

In the Lutheran Confessions these gifts of Christ which bestow the benefits of Christ are deemed gifts of the Word, as Jesus Christ is the Word.

We now want to return to the gospel, which gives guidance and help against sin in more ways than one, because God is extravagantly rich in his grace; first, through the spoken word, in which forgiveness of sins is preached to the whole world (which is the proper function of the gospel); second, through baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar; fourth, through the power of the keys and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers and sisters.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore [Baptism] is not simply a natural water, but a divine, heavenly, holy, and blessed water—praise it in any other terms you can—all by virtue of the Word which is a heavenly, holy Word that no one can sufficiently extol, for it contains and conveys all that is God’s.<sup>3</sup>

It is the Word, I say, that makes this a sacrament and distinguishes it from ordinary bread and wine, so that it is called and truly is Christ’s body and blood...The Word must make the element a sacrament... Now,

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes Theologici* in *Melanchthon and Bucer* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), p. 21. Melanchthon adds. “For unless you know why Christ put on flesh and was nailed to the cross, what good will it do you to know merely the history about him?” *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Smalcald Articles* III:4

<sup>3</sup> *Large Catechism* 458:17



this is not the word and ordinance of a prince or emperor, but of the divine Majesty...<sup>4</sup>

In the discussion of the previous chapter it was shown that the *genus maiestaticum* teaches that the finite form is capable of being inhabited by the infinite divine life (*finitum est capax infiniti*). By this the emphasis is on the form. Form is significant when it is inhabited by the infinite. “The Word became flesh.”

Now in this chapter the emphasis turns to the giving out of significant form inhabited with the divine life. God is the Giver of all good gifts<sup>5</sup> but by what means does He give His gifts? Answering this question will reveal something about the Giver and the gifts, as well as the act of giving the gifts.

#### *The Suffering God—Genus Tapeinotikon*

The discussion in this part begins as the previous discussion began, with the Word made flesh, Jesus the God-Man. In the previous discussion<sup>6</sup> it was shown that in Jesus the human flesh and blood participates fully in the eternal Word. This is expounded by means of the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*, specifically the *genus maiestaticum*. This may be expressed in a complementary fashion by means of the doctrine of the *genus tapeinotikon*; the eternal Word participates fully in the form of human flesh and blood.

The use of the doctrinal term, *genus tapeinotikon*, is not without strong criticism among Lutheran theologians, although we can do no more than note this problem here. Martin Luther employed the spirit of the term without using the term

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<sup>4</sup> *Large Catechism*, 458:10-11. In Luther's usage, the term “Word” is both the Word of Christ's promises and Christ Himself as “Word made flesh.”

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Psalm 85:12, James 1:17

<sup>6</sup> See pages 296-297.



itself. This represented for Luther a break with the tradition of an immutable, impassible God. Luther writes often and profoundly about God's suffering in the person of Jesus.

This is the communion of properties. GOD, who created all things and is above all things, is the highest and the lowest, so that we must say: 'That man, who was scourged, who is the lowest under death, under the wrath of God, under sin and every kind of evil, and finally under hell, is the highest God.' Why? Because it is the same Person...the highest divinity is the lowest creature...the lowest creature, the humanity or the man, sits at the right hand of the Father and has been made the highest.<sup>7</sup>

This emphasis on the full participation of the divine nature in the human nature of Jesus ensures, for Luther, a complete participation of humanity with its Creator. It is one of several paradoxes in Luther's Christology.<sup>8</sup>

Opposition from Lutheran dogmaticians (who otherwise rarely depart from the Reformer's writings) is based upon the fear that the *genus tapeinotikon* limits the divine nature.

Reciprocation, which has a place in the first genus [*genus idiomaticum*], does not occur in this genus; for there cannot be a humiliation, emptying or lessening of the divine nature (ταπείνωσις, κένωσις, ἐλάττωσις) as there is an advancement or exaltation (βελτίωσις or ὑπερύψωσις) of human nature. The divine nature is unchangeable...<sup>9</sup>

Later confessional Lutheran theologians feared that this *genus* lent support to the kenoticists.

Furthermore, the modern kenoticists raise the objection of one-sidedness against the *genus majesticum*. They demand emphatically that if there is a *genus majesticum*, there must also be a corresponding *genus tapeinotikon*, that is, a genus of humiliation or emptying.... If the

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 5 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), p. 219.

<sup>8</sup> Lienhard, *Witness to Jesus Christ*, p. 341.

<sup>9</sup> John Andrew Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* III, 159. Quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 328.



divine nature is reduced by depriving it of its operative divine attributes...there is nothing left by which the human nature might be exalted.<sup>10</sup>

Luther's use of this doctrine (*genus tapeinotikon*) was not to support a limiting or emptying of the divine nature in Jesus, but rather to ensure a full participation of both the divine and the human together in the one God-Man, Jesus. It is for this purpose that the *genus tapeinotikon* has significance in explicating the Lutheran aesthetic in music.

St. Paul gives expression to this in the second Corinthian epistle. The apostle records the words of Jesus: "My strength is made perfect in weakness." The divine strength is known in human weakness and suffering. Thus the Apostle Paul can conclude, "When I am weak then I am strong, for Christ's strength dwells in me."<sup>11</sup>

These Scriptural expressions find an early voice within Lutheran theology in Martin Luther's theses of the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518. In particular, Thesis 20 states,

He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross. The 'back' and visible things of God are placed in opposition to the invisible, namely, his human nature, weakness, foolishness. The Apostle in I Cor. 1 [:25] calls them the weakness and folly of God.... Now it is not sufficient for anyone, and it does him no good to recognize God in his glory and majesty, unless he recognizes him in the humility and shame of the cross.... For this reason true theology and recognition of God are in the crucified Christ.<sup>12</sup>

This hiddenness of God has been discussed in the previous section, but is material once again in this section. Such hiddenness addresses the participation of the

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<sup>10</sup> Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics, Vol. II* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), pp. 229, 234.

<sup>11</sup> II Corinthians 12:10

<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation," *Luther's Works, Vol. 31* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), pp. 52-53. See also Luther's discussion of *Tentatio* in *Luther's Works, Vol. 34*, pp. 285-287.



divine life in earthly forms, particularly, the participation of the divine life in the earthly forms of human weakness and suffering. On the cross of Jesus the glory of God is at once hidden and yet revealed. The hidden glory is a manifested glory, manifested in the form of Jesus' suffering and death. God reveals Himself by this contrary means. *Sub contraria specie* is the Lutheran theological expression of this insight.

In Luther's Heidelberg theses, however, the contrariness of God is not an abstraction, merely signified by the cross of Christ. God's contrary self-revelation is made concrete in the suffering and death of the God-Man Jesus. Furthermore, this contrariness of God, concretized in Christ's suffering and death, becomes part of the believer's life who, by faith, has become a participant in the weakness/strength of the cross. It is crucial to recognize this point. There is a Christological anthropology at work in the Lutheran aesthetic in music, an aesthetic that is formed and informed by human weakness and suffering.<sup>13</sup>

There is a full participation by God in the weakness, the suffering and death, of the Son. This full participation by God in the weakness of the Son reveals something about God. For not only is earthly form capable of being inhabited by the divine life of God (*finitum est capax infiniti*) but God fully participates in the earthly form-inhabited life of the Son (*genus tapeinotikon*).

As noted previously (see pages 265-266), while the *genus tapeinotikon* is not known by that term in Luther, and while the term is studiously avoided by the later Lutheran dogmaticians, nevertheless the thought expressed by this doctrine is present from the beginning of Luther's theology.

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<sup>13</sup> See The Heidelberg Disputation, Thesis 13, in *Luther's Works, Vol. 31*, p. 53.



It is true and right to say that God is born, suckled and bred, sleeps in the cradle, is cold, walks, falls, wonders, wakes up, eats, drinks, suffers, dies, etc.<sup>14</sup>

Luther expresses how the man Jesus is at the same time fully God in everything from conception to death. The union of divine and human in the one Christ is a true and full union.

For Luther it is this maintaining of the full participation of God in the weakness of the suffering and death of Jesus which serves the certainty of the redemptive work of Jesus' death. It is the God-Man who dies on the cross. It is not the man alone but the God-Man united in the one Christ. God participates in the death of Jesus. Therefore by God's participation in death, via the God-Man Jesus, death too becomes a means to reveal God. In death there is life.<sup>15</sup>

### *The Hidden Made Known*

From the cross of Jesus the *sub contraria specie* is made known in the bestowing of the benefits of the cross,<sup>16</sup> and in the preached Word, in Holy Baptism, in the Lord's Supper, the gifts/benefits of the cross are bestowed. Once again, the previous part emphasized the capability of the forms of preaching, water and bread and wine to be inhabited by the divine life, the God-Man Jesus.<sup>17</sup> In this section the emphasis is upon the One inhabiting the forms. It is the certainty of the "true/real presence."

Here you must take your stand and say that wherever Christ is

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<sup>14</sup> *Tischreden* 4, 68 18ff; quoted in Lienhard, *Witness to Jesus Christ*, pp. 340-341.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. John 11:25, 12:24-25

<sup>16</sup> Martin Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," *Luther's Works, Vol. 40* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), pp. 213-214.

<sup>17</sup> See pages 255-261.



according to his divinity, he is there as a natural, divine person and he is also naturally and personally there.... If you can say, 'Here is God,' then you must also say, 'Christ the human being is present, too.' And if you could show me one place where God is and not the human being, then the person is already divided, and I could at once say truthfully, 'Here is God who is not a human being and has never become a human being. But no God like that for me!'<sup>18</sup>

The *genus tapeinotikon* is employed to explain how the eternal God is fully present and at work in the finite flesh and blood of Jesus; fully present from conception to death and resurrection; fully participating in the limits of the human flesh and blood of Jesus from conception to death and resurrection. At no point within the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is He not fully God and fully human.

This real presence of God *sub contraria specie* of the human flesh and blood of Jesus is what reveals the certainty of the benefits/gifts in preaching and in the sacraments. The baptized person is clothed with Christ,<sup>19</sup> the Christ who is fully present—fully theanthropic—in the washing of Holy Baptism. Similarly the person who eats and drinks the consecrated bread and wine of the Lord's Supper eats and drinks the Christ who is fully present—fully God and human—in "the bread which we break" and "the cup which we bless."<sup>20</sup> Even so, the preacher's words which reach the ear of the hearer "in the stead and by the command of the Lord Jesus Christ"<sup>21</sup> are the very words of the Christ who is fully present—fully God and fully human—in the words that enter the hearer's ears.

In this way the earthly forms of words, of water and of bread and wine are not merely forms pointing to a higher reality. Rather, *sub contraria specie*, the earthly

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<sup>18</sup> Luther, cited in *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration* VIII:82.

<sup>19</sup> Galatians 3:27

<sup>20</sup> I Corinthians 10:16

<sup>21</sup> *Augsburg Confession* V: Luke 10:16



forms are forms inhabited by the whole Christ, fully God and fully human in one person. Thus not only are the earthly forms capable of being inhabited by the whole Christ (as the earthly flesh and blood is capable of the eternal Word) but also, contrariwise, the whole Christ is capable of participating in the earthly forms (as the eternal Word is capable of participating in the earthly flesh and blood of Jesus). This Christological insight was implicit in Praetorius' writings on music as well as in the texts of hymn writers Nicolai, Brorson and Grundtvig.

### *The Crucified Composer*

It is my proposal—new to my knowledge—that in a Lutheran aesthetic in music the composer is included in Jesus' invitation, "Take up your cross and follow Me."<sup>22</sup> The calling/vocation of composer is not isolated from the calling to faith. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote (and experienced),

When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call.<sup>23</sup>

The gift of musical composition is the summons to the Gospel, it is a participation in the cross of Jesus Christ, a summons/participation laid upon/taken up by the individual composer. This has been little acknowledged in Lutheran circles, although in some Lutheran circles there is an advocacy for the Office of kantor as a true Office of the Holy Ministry, and to ensure that the church musician is faithful to this ministry,

*Augsburg Confession* XIV should embrace the Office of kantor: "Concerning church

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Matthew 10:38, 16:24; Luke 9:23, 14:27

<sup>23</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* [*Nachfolge*], trans. R. H. Fuller (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1963), p. 99.



government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call [*on ordentlichen Beruf*].”

Certainly, as Luther knew, such a Call can be burdensome.<sup>24</sup> Citing the St. Christopher legend Luther pointed out how the unwitting Christopher carries the Christ, hidden in the person of the boy, across the raging stream. Afterward, the Reformer observes, it is discovered that the carried Christ has ensured the safe passage across the torrent for Christopher. The strength of the Christ is hidden (*sub contraria specie*) in the appearance of the weakness of the little boy.

All right then, anybody who has taken upon himself the burden of the Christ, the beloved Child, must carry him all the way across the water or drown; there is no middle way...were the water never so deep we shall nevertheless go through it with Christ.

So it is with all other things; when it gets going it becomes too heavy, whether it be sin, devil, hell, or even our own conscience. But how are we going to do it? Where shall we go and hide ourselves? For us it looks as if the whole thing would fall to the ground.... I too see the good Christopher sinking; nevertheless he gets through, for he has a tree he holds on to. This tree is the promise that Christ will do something remarkable with our suffering. ‘In the world,’ he says, ‘you will have afflictions and tribulations, but in me you shall have peace.’ And St. Paul says, ‘We have a faithful God who helps us out of affliction, so that we can bear it.’ These sayings are staves, yea, trees, which we can hold on to and let the waters roar and foam as they will.<sup>25</sup>

For Luther this “tree” is the promise of Christ—made known by His cross at the same time that the strength of His promise is hidden on the cross—to which one clings in the torrent and is saved; the promise of Christ which is given to the Christian in the Word. The strength of the promises in Christ are hidden (*sub contraria specie*) in the sufferings of the Christian, who yet is a “Christopher” (Christ bearer) and, by

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<sup>24</sup> Martin Luther, “Sermons,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 51 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 202.

<sup>25</sup> *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 51, p. 202.



implication, allied with Christ's redemptive act as "crucifier" (cross bearer).<sup>26</sup>

Now the composer, like Christopher, is taking up the innocent looking calling of musical composition. In this calling the composer is, in truth, taking up the person of the creative Word hidden in the weakness of the composer's own craft. For while the craft of musical composition may appear to be a beautiful and effortless task, ample witnesses throughout music history can testify to the difficulty and suffering of setting down in written form the music which the composer hears in his or her mind.<sup>27</sup> In a very real way the composer is subservient to his or her own gifts of composition. The composer "dies to self" and lives in the calling of the creative Word, Jesus Christ, who now works in and through the composer. To paraphrase St. Paul's words, a composer might declare, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer [compose], but Christ [composes] in me."<sup>28</sup> (The chapters of Part One showed how the composer's craft was understood and expressed by Lutheran kantors, composers and church musicians through history, although without full acknowledgement by the theologians of the Church.)

Ordinarily the creative work of God is located under discussions concerning the 1st Article of the Creed. By His speaking God has "created all that is, seen and unseen." *Ex nihilo* God speaks, and what He has spoken comes into being *ex nihilo*.

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<sup>26</sup> *Luther's Works, Vol. 51*, p. 203.

<sup>27</sup> "I was spurred on to compose such a work [*Symphoniae Sacrae*] in our German mother tongue. After prolonged beginnings, I finally finished it, with God's help, along with much other work." Heinrich Schütz in *Composers on Music*, ed. Josiah Fisk (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), p. 19. "Here, in Munich...they believe that good music may be considered a heaven-sent gift, but in the abstract only. for as soon as they sit down to play, they produce the stupidest, silliest stuff imaginable, and when people do not like it they pretend that is because it is still too highbrow...On the other hand, having played myself several times, I found the audience so receptive and open-minded that I was doubly vexed by these frivolities." Felix Mendelssohn in a letter to Carl Zelter, *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>28</sup> Galatians 2:20



“God does what He says and says what He does.”<sup>29</sup>

The Gospel according to St. John brings this creative power of God into the 2nd Article of the Creed with the Gospel’s prologue concerning the creative Word become flesh. “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that has been made.”<sup>30</sup> Jesus is this creative Word, in all of its fullness, now become flesh.

Thus the Logos is concretely united with the plurality of creatures by humanity, or more strictly by the one man who for his part integrates humanity into a unity as himself the ‘new man.’<sup>31</sup>

Thus any “creating” is done in Christ the Word, by Christ the Word and through Christ the Word “in whom all things hold together.” Even the “creating” of musical composition is the work of the Word made flesh (without whom nothing exists) at work in and through the human composer who has responded to the Gospel summons, “taken up the cross,” of this particular calling.

How then is it possible that we suggest that the creative Word made flesh is dwelling fully in the composer? Certainly the *sub contraria specie* allows an enormous possibility. This phrase, *sub contraria specie*, does not bind God to an absolute contrariness. Rather it confesses the mystery of God’s ways as perceived by the Christian on earth. God does not show His face, but His back side. The eternal God is revealed in the man Jesus. The glory and strength of God is made known in Jesus’ crucifixion. The resurrection of Jesus reveals that the eschatological age has dawned, yet in time the believer must await the fullness of that age.

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<sup>29</sup> “Gott tut, was er sagt, und sagt, was er tut; sein Sprechen ist wirksam, sein Wirken sprechend.” Oswald Bayer, *Gott als Autor* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1999), p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> John 1:3

<sup>31</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 2* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), p. 64.



Thus, by analogy, the divine Word speaks *sub contraria specie* through the human craft of musical composition. The eternal creative Word is at work *sub contraria specie* in the finite human musical composition set in time. The ineffable, incomprehensible speech of the Word is heard *sub contraria specie* through the humanly created music.

The *genus tapeinotikon* ensures that the hiddenness of God *sub contraria specie* is, nevertheless, the full participation of God in that hiddenness. As the divine nature fully participates in the human nature of Christ, so the fullness of God in Christ fully participates in the human being who bears the Office of musician. Thus, as Oskar Söhngen has suggested:

The proclamatory power of music [its Word-inhabited creative power], even the specific capacity of its proclamation, unites itself with the proclamation of the Word. When the apostle summoned the Colossians ‘to teach and to admonish one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs’ it was for him imperative that it be done, so that the Word of God might sound forth and be present in the congregation through singing.<sup>32</sup>

The music—“psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”—is not incidental to the presence of the Word (*i.e.*, the Word that is heard in the music because of the presence of the Word made flesh), but the musical Word, the *Verbum musicum*, that is heard is the very presence of the Word made flesh. Music is both “the proper and attractive garment for the joyful message of the Gospel”<sup>33</sup> (although a garment now inseparable from the Gospel it proclaims) and also remains a *musica crucis*, that is, a music shaped by the cross of Jesus Christ as well as music proclaiming the message of the cross of

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<sup>32</sup> Oskar Söhngen, *Theologie der Musik* (Kassel: Johannes Stauda Verlag, 1967), p. 328.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.



Jesus Christ.<sup>34</sup> Such music is of the cross, on the one hand carrying the crucified Christ (as “Christopher,” Christ bearer) and on the other hand being carried by the one who is called to take up this “cross” of musical composition (as “Crucifer,” cross bearer). That is, the eternal Word *sub contraria specie* in the human flesh and blood of Jesus is the crucified, risen and exalted Christ *sub contraria specie* in the calling of the composer. The same Word who speaks creatively, *ex nihilo*, speaks also *sub contraria specie* in the music crafted by the composer who has responded to the call of this crucified-exalted Word to “take up the cross.”

There is, then, an analogous relationship between these two expressions. What is *genus tapeinotikon* in Christ, the fullness of the divine nature participating in the human nature in the one person Christ, is seen *sub contraria specie* in the human person, the fullness of the divine and human, crucified and risen Christ participating in the composer. This participation of the divine Word in the weakness of the human composer is dependent upon the union of Christ with the composer as Christian; in a related manner as the *communicatio idiomatum* is dependent upon the personal union of the divine and human natures in the one Christ. Here the Lutheran dogmaticians’ strictness in maintaining the *communicatio* without confusion is especially important and helpful for understanding Christ’s person in the composer/musician.

The union between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ is a much different, higher, indescribable communion. Because of this union and communion God is a human being and a human being is God. Nevertheless, through this union and communion neither the natures nor their characteristics are mixed together with the other, but each nature retains its own essence and characteristics.<sup>35</sup>

First, because in Christ there are and remain two distinct natures.

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Söhngen, *Theologie der Musik*, pp. 321-330.

<sup>35</sup> *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VIII*: 19



unchanged and unmixed in their natural essences and characteristics, and because these two natures exist as only one single person, therefore, the characteristic of each individual nature is not ascribed to that nature alone, as if it were separated from the person, but it is ascribed to the whole person, which is simultaneously God and human (whether he is called God or a human being).<sup>36</sup>

The human nature of Jesus does not become divine; it remains human and finite. Rather, by the personal union Jesus is both divine and human, two natures without confusion in the one person Christ. The finite human nature participates in the infinite divine nature. In like manner the Christian, by union with Christ in faith, does not become the Christ,<sup>37</sup> still the whole Christ, by the grace of this union, is present with the Christian. Christ and Christian are not confused but rather communicate—the weaknesses of the Christian taken by the Christ, the strength of the Christ taken by the Christian,<sup>38</sup> for “the mystical union does not consist merely in the harmony and tempering of the affections...but in a true, real, literal, and most intimate union; for Christ, John 17:21, uses the phrase, ‘to be in some one,’ which implies the real presence of the thing which is said to be *in*, not figuratively, as a lover in the beloved.”<sup>39</sup>

### *To Whom Are the Gifts Given?*

It now should be clear that many elements are held together in a common participation. For the purpose of explicating this Christological aesthetic, portions of the whole must be discussed separately. At the same time, however, these portions

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<sup>36</sup> *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration* VIII:36

<sup>37</sup> Confessional Lutheran theology, while considering Christ *in nobis*, insists that He remains Christ *extra nos*.

<sup>38</sup> Martin Luther; quoted in Lienhard, *Witness to Jesus Christ*, p. 131. The role of faith and Luther’s use of the term *fides Christi* will be considered in a later part of this chapter.



must be considered as a whole.

Form capable of the infinite (*finitum est capax infiniti*) is not a unique form separate unto itself; it is form taken up by the divine.<sup>40</sup> The form of God's presence now in time (*inhabitatio*) also has an eschatological dimension. What is now is proleptically taken up in the eschaton because the resurrection of Jesus is the proleptic revelation of what will be. This subject will be considered in the next chapter in the discussion of music as an expression of proleptic eschatology. In the same way the flesh of Jesus is not a pre-existing human flesh and blood capable of the indwelling by the eternal Word; it is the human flesh and blood taken up by the divine, namely, "conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary." So the composer who participates in Christ is not a flesh and blood composer capable in himself of participating in Christ. It is because the composer has been "taken up" by the Call of Christ in faith that the divine-human Christ participates fully in the composer.

Again, form does not exist apart from the maker of the form.<sup>41</sup> In the terms of this present study, musical form does not have an existence separated from the composer of musical form. Furthermore, the musical form together with the composer is joined with Christ Jesus who participates fully (*genus tapeinotikon, sub contraria specie*) in the music with the composer and through the composer's musical form. It is this participation by Christ in the composer and the composer's musical form that gives this discussion a sacramental language.

The next chapter considers the recipient of the Christ-inhabited/communicated composer's music. Is listening to this music on a par with composing/performing it?

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<sup>39</sup> Quenstedt, *Theologia* III. 623; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 482.

<sup>40</sup> *The Athanasian Creed* 33-34



How is the listener drawn into this participation with Christ *sub contraria specie* the Christ-communicated music? Is it the faith of the listener which apprehends the music, as faith apprehends all the gifts of God, even the Christ?<sup>42</sup> Is it the ability of the music (as also the composer and the performer) to prepare and to create the apprehending faith in the listener? Finally, is all music capable of such faith-apprehended participation. If not, what distinguishes this faith formed/forming music from other music?

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<sup>41</sup> See Bayer, *Gott als Autor*, pp. 132-133. .

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Romans 8:28-32. "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"



## Chapter 8 *The Resurrection and Musical Experience*

*A new miracle deserves a new song.* – Martin Luther

### *The New Person in Christ*

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.”<sup>1</sup> The significant point in this verse is that a person is “new...in Christ.” This is especially significant for understanding what is “new” in music.

The “new” which the apostle states “has come” is brought to light in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus is the new thing<sup>2</sup> unlike anything that has been before. This resurrection is not the resuscitation of a dead body, but rather it is the metamorphosis (μετεμορφώω) into a new body—once dead now alive, once perishable now imperishable, once mortal now immortal, once natural now spiritual.<sup>3</sup> This is the “new.”

The doctrine of the *genus maiestaticum* emphasizes this something “new” revealed by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The human flesh and blood of Jesus participates in the divine life of the Λόγος (Logos), the eternal Son of God.

It is a clear rule shared by the entire ancient, orthodox church that whatever Christ received in time according to the testimony of Holy Scripture he received not according to the divine nature (according to which he had all things from eternity), but that the person received it in time *ratione et respectu humanae naturae* (that is, according to the

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<sup>1</sup> II Corinthians 5:17

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 43:16-21

<sup>3</sup> I Corinthians 15:42-44



assumed human nature).<sup>4</sup>

[Christ] was raised up by God not according to His divine nature, but only according to his human nature. Yet the divine nature is not, therefore, altogether excluded from this act; for it has imparted to the human nature the power to rise again, and has made its resurrection of advantage to us.<sup>5</sup>

In the post-resurrection appearances Jesus appears to his disciples with a body that can be touched.<sup>6</sup> This tangible body, he says, “has flesh and blood.” He eats with the disciples.<sup>7</sup> Jesus’ humanity, his flesh and blood, participates in the glory that is his in the resurrection.

Nevertheless, the human nature of Jesus itself is not divinized but transformed (μετεμορφώω). The human nature of flesh and blood remains human flesh and blood while it shares in the glory of the divine nature at the resurrection. The distinction of the two natures, both human and divine, is maintained by the *genus maiestaticum* at the same time that the full participation of the human nature in the divine is maintained. Thus this *genus* confesses that omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence are communicated to the human man Jesus even though during his earthly ministry he did not exercise the fullness of deity. “For the plan of the humiliation was such that the divine glory did not always manifest itself clearly, fully, and gloriously in and through the assumed flesh with which it was united in the personal union.”<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, as St. Paul maintains, the fullness of deity dwells in

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<sup>4</sup> *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration* VIII 57.

<sup>5</sup> John Andrew Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* (1685), III, 377; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 401.

<sup>6</sup> John 20:27

<sup>7</sup> Luke 24:41-43

<sup>8</sup> Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, p. 326.



bodily form in Jesus.<sup>9</sup>

While the participation of the human nature in the divine nature of the eternal Son of God is present in Jesus throughout the days of his earthly ministry, it is in his resurrection that the hidden participation is made plain. The human flesh and blood of Jesus participates so fully in the divine nature that this flesh and blood is glorified in the resurrection, sharing in the omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence of the eternal Son.

The purpose for maintaining the *genus maiestaticum* so clearly and powerfully is not only for the giving of honor to the fullness of Christ, both human and divine, but also for ensuring the certainty of the participation of the Christian in the divine life, through the same Jesus Christ. The Scriptures are emphatic that this new life of the resurrected Jesus is not limited to him alone. The apostle Paul writes famously, "...just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."<sup>10</sup> This new life is not another, different new life from that of Jesus. It is in fact the very new life that the resurrected Christ now lives.

In a sense, the Nicodemus account is more radical in its demands for rebirth. Though he misinterprets 'birth from on high' as an actual birth from his mother—this is the theological and literary genius of the account—Nicodemus does recognize that Jesus is asking something truly revolutionary of him. He must be a different person, something which he either does not understand or does not want...After Baptism he will not be the same person, but will be 'resurrected' as a different person.<sup>11</sup>

This is the same sort of resurrection language that is used in Titus, chapter 3,

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<sup>9</sup> Colossians 2:9

<sup>10</sup> Romans 6:4

<sup>11</sup> David P. Scaer, *Baptism, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics, Vol. XI* (St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 1999), p. 142.



where St. Paul describes the effect of Baptism as “a washing of regeneration.”<sup>12</sup> In Baptism a person is re-generated, begun anew, by being united with Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup>

Thus through Baptism God encompasses the entire course of human life. Even though in this world the baptized is still moving toward his death, he may be certain on the basis of his Baptism that he has already experienced his death, for he has been given Christ’s death. Even though the resurrection is man’s future, he may be certain on the basis of his Baptism that he already shares in the new life.<sup>14</sup>

The emphasis here is that the human being really does participate, through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in faith, in the person of Jesus Christ. And if the person participates in Jesus Christ, that person participates in the divine life in Christ and all that the divine entails.<sup>15</sup>

Martin Luther wrote of a “joyous exchange” (*fröhliche Wechsel*) in the Christian through faith.<sup>16</sup> Building upon the Athanasian couplet, “God became man that man might become God,” Luther explained how in faith the Christian participates in Jesus’ own human/divine participation. It is a “communication of attributes” between the Christ and the Christian.

Faith unites the soul with Christ as a bride is united with her bridegroom. By this mystery, as the Apostle teaches, Christ and the soul become one flesh. And if they are one flesh and there is between them a true marriage—indeed the most perfect of all marriages, since human marriages are but poor examples of this one true marriage—it follows that everything they have they hold in common, the good as

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<sup>12</sup> Titus 3:5

<sup>13</sup> After an extended discussion of Titus 3:5 and Matthew 19:28 Regin Prenter concludes, “This can only mean that baptismal regeneration and renewal are a foretaste, the beginning of the actual resurrection.” Regin Prenter, *Schöpfung und Erlösung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), p. 437ff.

<sup>14</sup> Edmund Schlink, *The Doctrine of Baptism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), pp. 53-54.

<sup>15</sup> Tuomo Mannermaa, “Justification and *Theosis* in Lutheran-Orthodox Perspective.” *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, ed. Carl E. Braaten & Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), p. 32.

<sup>16</sup> As noted earlier—see page 123, n34. of this thesis—Luther employed the term “exchange” (*Wechsel, commercium*) from the writings on the Incarnation by Athanasius and Augustine, but often focused more closely on the elements of salvation in the joyous exchange.



well as the evil. Accordingly the believing soul can boast of and glory in whatever Christ has as though it were its own, and whatever the soul has Christ claims as his own.<sup>17</sup>

“Because faith involves a real union with Christ and because Christ is the divine person, the believer does indeed participate in God.”<sup>18</sup> The *genus maiestaticum*, then, maintains with all certainty that as Jesus’ humanity truly participates in the divine nature of the eternal Son, so too the Christian participates fully, really, in all the blessings of divinity through participation (union) with Jesus Christ.

### *The New Creation in Christ*

Having said all of this, it is important to note that the language of new birth or resurrection is not limited to the believer. The whole of creation will share in this new life. “The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious light of the children of God.” St. John in the Revelation writes, “saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.” In this he echoes the prophecy of Isaiah: “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth.”<sup>19</sup>

While these and other writers in Scripture point to this new creation as a phenomenon of an age yet to come,<sup>20</sup> the new creation—both the human being “new” in Christ together with the created realm “new” in Christ—is a future reality present now in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

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<sup>17</sup> Martin Luther. “The Freedom of the Christian,” *Luther’s Works, Vol. 31* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), p. 351.

<sup>18</sup> Mannermaa, *Union with Christ*, p. 32.

<sup>19</sup> Isaiah 65:17

<sup>20</sup> Isaiah 43:16-21; 49:8-13; 65:17-25; II Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 7:9-17; *et al.*



Only at the end of all events can God be revealed in his divinity, that is, as the one who works all things, who has power over everything. Only because in Jesus' resurrection the end of all things, which for us has not yet happened, has already occurred can it be said of Jesus that the ultimate reality is present in him, and so also that God himself, his glory, has made its appearance in Jesus in a way that cannot be surpassed. Only because the end of the world is already present in Jesus' resurrection is God himself revealed in him.<sup>21</sup>

This statement builds upon the *genus maiestaticum*, which in the early Lutheran dogmaticians was important to maintain for the certainty of the benefits of faith to the individual Christian, as it draws together the implications for time and space impacted by the “new” thing of Jesus’ resurrection.

### *The New Age in Christ*

The full implication is that now it may be said that the ultimate new life, the eschatological life, is likewise already present in the person who is “in Christ.” As Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life...he has crossed over from death to life.”<sup>22</sup>

The fulfillment of human destiny has been revealed in Jesus through his resurrection from the dead. Jesus did not experience this event only for himself but for all men; Jesus' resurrection allowed the destiny of all men to life in nearness to God, as Jesus had proclaimed it, to appear in him.<sup>23</sup>

This present reality of the eschatological new life in Christ will be confirmed only on the Last Day, even as Jesus’ own earthly participation in the divinity of God, revealed by the resurrection, is vindicated on the Last Day.<sup>24</sup>

This confirmatory nature of the eschaton (first revealed in Jesus' resurrection)

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<sup>21</sup> Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 69.

<sup>22</sup> John 5:24

<sup>23</sup> Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 196.



now has a retroactive force over the previous state before the eschaton. This means that, for Jesus, his human nature participating in the divine nature was only fully revealed in his resurrection from the dead. Yet this participation did not begin with the resurrection. The resurrection revealed, retroactively, that this participation had been present from the beginning of Jesus' earthly life. In like manner, the Christian's new life through participation in the life of God through the God-Man Jesus is only fully revealed in the Christian's own resurrection from the dead on the Last Day. Yet this participation too is revealed, retroactively, on the Last Day to have been present during the earthly life of the Christian through faith in Jesus Christ.

In the first Johannine epistle the apostle writes, "Dear friends, now we are children of God and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."<sup>25</sup> "Now" and "will be" are held together simultaneously. What the Christian is "now" can be known fully only when "what will be" is revealed, revealing at the same time that this "what will be" was already present in the "now." Such a "knowledge" is based solely on Jesus the Christ in whose own resurrection it was revealed who he was, had been, and is, and by this same resurrection of Christ it is revealed who the Christian is and will be.<sup>26</sup>

The Lutheran doctrine of the *genus maiestaticum* is intended to carry the full weight of this retroactive confirmatory element in Jesus' resurrection.

They have distorted this statement when they try to explain the words 'All power is given to Me' as meaning that this power has been

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<sup>24</sup> Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 196.

<sup>25</sup> I John 3:2

<sup>26</sup> Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 137.



restored or recommitted to the divine nature of the Son. But this nature He never lost or laid aside this power. Thus it is with reference to that nature out of whose weakness He was crucified that the Scripture says ‘All power has been given to Me,’ since in and through this assumed nature, now after He has laid aside His humiliation. He will gloriously exercise His divine power which had been previously hidden....

Because of the humiliation He did not always make use of this power in and through His assumed nature. But this power showed itself full and demonstrably in and through the assumed nature after He had laid aside His infirmities.<sup>27</sup>

In his earthly life as a flesh and blood human being, Jesus was fully who he is now for eternity as the glorified Son; who Jesus is now in eternity is who He had been from the moment in time when he “was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.” In other words, the human nature of Jesus has participated in the divine nature of the Son of God from its earthly beginning and continues to do so for all eternity. Now by virtue of Jesus' resurrection, it has been revealed that the same can be said of the Christian. The Christian human being participates in the divine nature now in the days of earthly life and for eternity through union with the divine-human Christ.

### *The New Song in Christ*

The foregoing discussion provides significant meaning to the Psalmist's exhortation: “Sing to the Lord a new song.”<sup>28</sup> The Lord has done a new thing in and through the person Jesus. Therefore a new song is fitting as an expression of this “new thing”—the resurrection of Jesus in particular, and in general the resurrection of Jesus as the revelation of human destiny. The music of this “new song” recalls and celebrates the resurrection of Jesus as well as anticipates the resurrection of the

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<sup>27</sup> Chemnitz, *The Two Natures*, pp. 316-317.

<sup>28</sup> Psalm 96:1



Christian.

As was noted earlier<sup>29</sup> music is frequently considered in the light of the First Article, that is, as a gift of God the Father's creative work. Though it is clear from the discussion of the *genus maiestaticum* that there are Second Article implications for music, there does remain a newness for music under the First Article.

The revelation that God has done a new thing in and through the person of Jesus summons the Christian musician to create new music as an expression of the ongoing newness of what God has done in Christ. There can be no locking up of music in one particular stylistic period of history. As soon as music is so confined it ceases to be new. There is, then, at the heart of the Gospel a freedom, even a compulsion, for the musician to press the limits, to resist the conventional, to endow the "new thing" of the Lord with music that is truly new.

With Jesus Christ a new age of music has been brought about. That means in its plainest sense, that the previous time under the Law can be seen immediately as a 'songless' (*liedlose*) eon. Now for the first time music is seen in its proper elemental setting. Whoever has been delivered from sin, death and the devil by God's beloved Son 'cannot refrain but must joyfully and with delight sing and say.' Yes, music becomes the dividing line at which faith and unbelief are separated; 'whoever will not sing and say, that is a mark that the person does not believe and has not listened to the new, joyous Testament but rather has heeded the old, corrupt, miserable Testament.' (Luther).... The outward shape of music is, therefore, not only for passing the Gospel along to the Elect, it also becomes a sign of the Gospel: the lifting of the Law and the joyful freedom of the children of God shine forth in the 'Round Dance' (*Tanzreigen*) of a hymn motet (*Liedmotette*).... The Gospel calls for music!<sup>30</sup>

Söhnngen's designation of the Old Covenant era as *liedlose* is not a denial of the musical expression of faith in God's promises heard in the temple ritual. As an

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. p. 270ff of this thesis.

<sup>30</sup> Söhnngen, *Theologie der Musik*, p. 321.



anticipation of the coming of the Christ, the era was not *liedlose*, but because “the law was our custodian until Christ came,” as St. Paul notes in Galatians 3, the Old Covenant era, being under the custodial care of the law, could not yet sing according to the fullness of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

With the revelation of the “new” in Jesus Christ, does this rule out music of any past for a musician to be a musician of the “new thing”? Is the old music an “old wine” that will burst and spoil the newness of the Gospel?<sup>31</sup> Or can the old be made new? In Part One of this thesis Luther, Schütz, Bach, Mendelssohn, Distler and Pepping were Lutheran musicians who particularly struggled with the old and new in music, both in relation to time and to the Gospel. This question leads to the nature of the new thing as Jesus Christ has made it known. “The old has passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

A new miracle deserves a new song, thanksgiving, and preaching. The new miracle is that God through His Son has parted the real Red, Dead Sea and has redeemed us from the real Pharaoh, Satan. This is singing a new song, that is, the holy Gospel, and thanking God for it. God help us to do so. Amen.

The stringed instruments of the following psalms are to help in the singing of this new song; and Wolf Heinz [organist in Halle, 1541] and all pious, Christian musicians should let their singing and playing to the praise of the Father of all grace sound forth with joy from their organs and whatever other beloved musical instruments there are (recently invented and given by God), of which neither David nor Solomon, neither Persia, Greece, nor Rome, knew anything. Amen.<sup>32</sup>

It may be seen now how the “new” carries music from a First Article issue of the gifts of God’s creation and places it squarely within the Second Article of the person and work Jesus Christ. It is in Christ that the old becomes new—the person

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<sup>31</sup> Matthew 9:17

<sup>32</sup> An inscription penned by Luther with Psalm 149:1 in a Bible given to Wolf Heinz. *WA[Weimar Ausgabe]* 48, 85-86:116



and all things. Through the union that is by faith in Jesus Christ the human being becomes new. Through this union of faith in Christ the musician becomes the composer of new music. The performer, through the participation by faith, becomes the performer of new music. The listener, by this same faith, hears new music; hears music anew. Everything united to Christ Jesus becomes new through the union in faith, the participation of the human in the divine.

All the attributes of created being obtain a new meaning in Christ, although the thing designated, *i.e.*, the created being, retains its identity in Christ.... Words like *homo*, *humanitas*, *passus*, etc, become new words when they are said of Christ. They describe the same things as in nonchristological talk, but in a new and different way.<sup>33</sup>

If the *Canticum novum*, the new Christ-Song is to be sung in understanding, it requires a pure heart as only the redeemed can offer up; not that music itself requires redemption, as though it first must receive Baptism before it can be placed in the service of Jesus Christ. It was already much more in the time of the Law. For those who could hear it rightly, it was a hidden type (*Hinweis*) of Christ, an anticipation of the glad tidings of the Gospel. Where music was played, there—whether one knew it or not—the sign of the Messianic expectation came to pass.<sup>34</sup>

The newness of the music does not reside inherently in the music itself. In Christ the music is new. The newness is present by communication of the divine glory through the union of the musician (composer, performer, listener) with the divine-human Jesus (*genus maiestaticum*).

A newness according to the First Article concerning creation would restrict the newness to the evolution of musical style, as one stylistic period is rendered old by the appearance of a new style.<sup>35</sup> When considered under the First Article alone old music

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<sup>33</sup> Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ*, p. 358, n. 137.

<sup>34</sup> Söhngen, *Wandel und Beharrung*, p. 95.

<sup>35</sup> In the early 1960s Oskar Söhngen wrote: "...to begin with, it is after all only a theory that new music is to be found exclusively among the twelve-tone and serial-technique composers...Thank God



becomes merely old, a relic, a remnant of the former things that have passed away.

What once was is now no more. This relegating of the old style to the dead past enslaves the musician to a fruitless quest of pursuing the elusive “next new thing.” It is a quest that cannot be satisfied, for as soon as the next new thing is realized it becomes old in that moment. This is a newness according to time and creation. The newness of the Gospel’s “new song” is according to the resurrection of Christ, the appearance of the eschaton within time.

There certainly can be a limited place for seeking newness according to the First Article. The musician in Christ has the freedom to do this; challenging the present, breaking away from old forms to create new forms. It is of the essence of the musician’s call to follow Christ, dying to self and the present moment, living in Christ and in the promised inheritance of what is yet to be. To do this, however, the musician must be “in Christ,” a Second Article consideration. Thus when the new in music is considered under the Second Article, “all things”—including the near or distant past—become new.<sup>36</sup> This was demonstrated in greater detail by the chapters in Part One as

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that a number of the true masters who were molded by the spirit of those years of ‘new departure’ (*Aufbruchsjahre*) in the third decade of our century are still with us and still present us with valid (*gültigen*) works of church music.” Söhnngen, *Wandel und Beharrung* (Berlin: Verlag Merseburger, 1965), p. 69.

By the late 1990s a new “new” had developed around composers such as Arvo Pärt: “Performers of Pärt’s tintinnabuli works stand a good chance of experiencing something not so very common these days, but which used to be an essential ingredient of musical life in earlier times: the excitement of presenting new music to a wide audience and discovering that the lines of communication are completely and appreciatively open.... [Pärt] is undoubtedly one of the leading exponents of what I have called ‘abstract tonality’, and it is thanks to him and to composers like him that the world of ‘art’ music has been rejuvenated in recent years and occasionally enjoys popular esteem.” Paul Hillier, *Arvo Pärt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 206.

The “rejuvenation” mentioned by Hillier is in criticism of the 12-tone serialism, championed by Söhnngen, which had grown stale by the 1990s.

<sup>36</sup> The composer John Tavener colorfully describes how the music of Handel can sound “new” in a way that Mozart does not. “[Handel] never reminds one of the powdered wig, in the way that Mozart does in something like *The Marriage of Figaro*. I know Mozart transcends the powdered wig, but you’re much more aware of the frivolous age in which he lived with Mozart than you are with Handel.” Tavener, *The*



musicians and theologians over the span of centuries grappled with their understanding of music in relation to their own past, present and future.

At this point several conclusions can be stated in regard to music as a “new song” in Christ who has made the “new thing” known by his resurrection from the dead. First, if a person is in Christ, that person is a new creation. (II Cor. 5:17) The person is ‘new’ by union with Christ through faith. Christologically considered, this union means that all the music such a person composes will be new. All music this person hears will be heard new. All music this person performs will be new. It is new because the person has become a new creation by union with Christ, apart from a newness measured in terms of time.<sup>37</sup>

Secondly, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the revelation of human destiny. All of humanity new in Christ by union with Christ in faith participates in this revealed destiny. This destiny is a present reality by union with Christ. The newness by union with Christ impacts newness according to time. In Christ present humanity participates in the destiny revealed in the resurrection along with all those who ever have been in Christ and with all those who ever will be in Christ. Thus the music of the past that was ‘new’ in Christ in that past, and the music of the future that will be ‘new’ in Christ in that future are both ‘new’ and living in the present for a present humanity in Christ.

Now I have already indicated the tension which one has to bear and which is inherent in the name *Kirchen-Musik*—to give the church what belongs to the church, but to do so without failing to give music its due. Only truly great music will be genuine liturgical music. In other words, this means: No music is fit to be used in the liturgical service if it is not confessional music at the same time (‘I believe, therefore I speak’—Ps 116:10). And equally indispensable is the other

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*Music of Silence: A Composer's Testament*, p. 143.

<sup>37</sup> Söhngen, *Theologie der Musik*, p. 322.



consideration: that it really is a ‘new song’ (Psalm 98)...This does not mean, however, that at any given time only the works just created and just published should be performed (works that often are not ‘new’ in the present sense). They could also be works of old music that are ‘contemporary’ with us, for the church lives in the depth dimensions of history (*Tiefendimensions der Geschichte*), too. In any case, these works must possess the magnetic and enthusiastic vitality (*Lebendigkeit*), which is the secret of any actuality.<sup>38</sup>

Thirdly, through participation in Christ, in whom and with whom the human nature participates in the divine nature, music in Christ (because the musician is in Christ) becomes an expression of Deity for humanity and also an expression of humanity for Deity. Music is communication in the Christological sense (*communicatio*) between Deity and humanity through union with the divine-human Christ.

On a third—theologically, the decisive—level, we have to observe and evaluate sacred music as music serving Biblical communication between God and humanity. This, of course, is not limited to music particularly prepared for liturgical purposes, but includes music underscoring a message theologically meaningful in an actual setting of communication here and now.<sup>39</sup>

One might rightly question Lønning’s expression “music underscoring a message.” It implies the separation of Word and music, placing music in the subordinate position which was so disastrous for generations of Lutherans. The more accurate portrayal is that the music communicates along with the message, since both belong to the living Word.

Fourthly, in the God-Man Jesus the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant are held together in one communion of saints (the eschatological life of

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<sup>38</sup> Söhngen. *Wandel und Beharrung*, p. 68.

<sup>39</sup> Per Lønning. “Sacred Music,” *Incarnation and Creativity*, Liturgisk skriftserie nr. 1 (Trondheim, Norway: Tapir Forlag, 1997), p. 46.



heaven and the earthly life held in communion in Christ). By participation in this Christ the music of earth—the music composed, performed and heard by those in Christ of earth—participates in heaven's song. By participation in Christ the music of heaven—the music composed, performed and heard by those in Christ of heaven—participates in earth's song. As the Russian envoys from Prince Vladimir declared after experiencing the beauty of the Divine Liturgy in Constantinople, “We knew not whether we were in heaven or whether we were on earth.... We cannot describe it to you.”<sup>40</sup>

Fifthly, because the person in Christ is a new creation and yet on earth remains an old creation—*simul justus et peccator*—the music composed, performed and heard by the person in Christ is likewise simultaneously new and old—wholly new even as it is wholly old, even as the person in Christ is wholly new and yet wholly old.

The painful difference between the promise of life, the unconditioned, unconditional promise of life to everyone and everything, and what daily contradicts it, cannot be disguised by theology; on the contrary theology corresponds to the passion of complaint, which perceives this difference. So theology necessarily entails temptation, contestation and controversy.<sup>41</sup>

The composer Igor Stravinsky, although not a Lutheran, recognized the tension of the Lutheran *simul*.

As for myself, I experience a sort of terror when, at the moment of setting to work and finding myself before the infinitude of possibilities that present themselves, I have the feeling that everything is permissible to me. If everything is permissible to me, the best and the worst...every undertaking becomes futile...What delivers me from the anguish into which an unrestricted freedom plunges me is the fact that I am always able to turn immediately to the concrete things that are here in

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<sup>40</sup> Recounted in Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 264.

<sup>41</sup> Oswald Bayer, “Worship and Theology” in *Worship and Ethics*, ed. Oswald Bayer and Alan Suggate (New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1996), p. 160.



question...My freedom thus consists in my moving about within the narrow frame that I have assigned myself for each one of my undertakings...The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees one's self of the chains that shackle the spirit.<sup>42</sup>

Sixthly and finally, since music's newness is a newness *simul justus et peccator* by virtue of the musician's participation *simul justus et peccator* in Christ, the glory of humanity's destiny proleptically present in music through participation in Christ is a hidden glory now. It is known only by faith to the person in Christ who participates now in that future glory. Known in faith, this newness is capable of provisional, not full, musical expression.<sup>43</sup>

Yet, as the Norwegian poet Johan Sebastian Welhaven, has written, '*Hvad ei med Ord kan nævnes i det rigeste Sprog, det Uudsigelige skal Digtet røbe dog.*' ('What never words can mention in the richest mood of speech, the depths unutterable, the poem unveils, to reach.') Music is the most consistent fulfillment of the poetic purpose: to express truth transcending the borders of simple [or very complex] vocabulary.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 63-65.

<sup>43</sup> Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 397.

<sup>44</sup> Lønning, *Incarnation and Creativity*, p. 37.



## Chapter 9 *The Office of the Word and the Musician*

*Indeed I plainly judge, and do not hesitate to affirm, that except for theology there is no art that could be put on the same level as music, since except for theology [music] alone produces what otherwise only theology can do, namely, a calm and joyful disposition. — Martin Luther*

In view of the discussion in the foregoing three chapters of Part Two, the question might arise: How can music do such great things? It is a question which echoes similar questions posed in Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*. In his catechetical approach of questions and answers Luther outlines the nature and the benefits of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. After doing so with concise and memorable words Luther then asks the next, clarifying question. Concerning the Sacrament of Holy Baptism he asks: "How can water do such great things?" Concerning the Sacrament of the Altar a similar question is posed: "How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?" These two questions provide Luther with the opening for brief answers that outline two significant elements in Lutheran theology.

In answer to the "how" question concerning Holy Baptism, Luther writes, "It is not the water, indeed, that does these great things [*i.e.*, "works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil and gives eternal salvation"], but the Word of God in and with the water, and faith, which trusts the Word of God in the water." Luther's answer concerning the Sacrament of the Altar is likewise concise: "It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them [forgiveness of sins, life and salvation], but the words written here, 'given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins': which words,



besides the bodily eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the Sacrament. and he that believes these words has what they say and express.”<sup>1</sup>

Concisely and clearly Luther states that there is nothing inherent in the earthly elements of water or bread and wine which creates the sacramental nature of receiving these elements. Water, bread and wine are not sacramental in themselves. It is the Word and trust (*fiducia*) in that Word, when coupled with the receiving of the earthly elements, by which the benefits of the Sacraments are given and received.

Accordingly, it is not the music itself that is the source of music’s gifts—music as an experience of union with Christ, music as experience of the cross and music as a foretaste of the resurrection. It is the presence of the Word in and with the music, together with the faith of the musician—composer, performer, hearer—who trusts the Word present in and with the music which gives to music its role in the benefits of Christ. The role of the Word and faith is definitive for any Christological understanding of a musical aesthetic.

### *The Word*

At the very outset of any discussion concerning the Word in Lutheran theology it is vital to recognize that there are three interrelated understandings of the term “Word.” It is, indeed, a multi-dimensional designation. As has been noted before, “Word” is the English equivalent of the Greek designation *Logos*, the second person of the Holy Trinity who became flesh as the person Jesus of Nazareth. Frequently, however, the term “Word” is used to identify the Holy Scriptures, the written words of the Bible. For Martin Luther, the Scriptures are Word in a derived sense because they

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<sup>1</sup> *Small Catechism, The Sacrament of Holy Baptism 5-6: The Sacrament of the Altar 5-6.*



testify to Christ Jesus, the *Logos* become flesh. “Scripture is the manger in which the Christ lies.” This understanding does not diminish the Scripture as Word, but, nonetheless, unites the Scriptures inseparably with Christ the Word.

Added to these understandings of “Word” is the Lutheran emphasis that the Church is, above all, the place of the spoken Word. The Church is a *Mundhaus* (“mouth house”) more than it is a “quill/pen house,” as Luther once noted. The scriptural Word about the Incarnate Word is primarily a proclaimed Word. This proclaimed Word is based upon the Scriptural Word and has as its content and purpose the making known of the promises concerning the Incarnate Word. This proclamation is not simply words about the person and work of Christ, but the effectual bestowal of what the words declare.

Bringing this multi-faceted term, Word, to its fullest expression Luther notes in a sermon on John 14:10 that all these dimensions of meaning are woven together (*inn einen Kuchen geschlagen*).

All that issues from Christ's lips emanates from the Father; for Christ declares: ‘What I say, not I, but the Father says.’ Likewise St. Paul and other apostles and preachers affirm: ‘It is not I who baptizes and absolves you; it is Christ. It is not we who are speaking; it is Christ and God Himself. Hence when you hear this sermon, you are hearing God Himself. On the other hand, if you despise this sermon, you are despising, not us but God Himself.’ For it is all from God, who condescends to enter the mouth of each Christian or preacher and says: ‘If you want to see Me or My work, look to Christ; if you want to hear Me, hear this Word.’ Christ transmits this command to the apostles; these pass it on to their successors, bishops and preachers; these, in turn, deliver it to all the world. Thus the apostles and pastors are nothing but channels through which Christ leads and transmits His Gospel from the Father to us. Therefore wherever you hear the Gospel properly taught or see a person baptized, wherever you see someone administer or receive the Sacrament, or wherever you witness someone absolving another, there you may say without hesitation: ‘Today I beheld God’s Word and work. Yes, I saw and heard God Himself preaching and baptizing.’ To be sure, the tongue, the voice, the hands, etc, are those of a human being; but the Word and ministry are really



those of the Divine Majesty Himself.<sup>2</sup>

From the passage it is clear that there is so much more involved in the designation “Word” than merely the words of Scripture.<sup>3</sup> Yet this “so much more” cannot be removed from the words of Scripture without doing violence to the designation “Word.”

In these matters, which concern the spoken, external Word, it must be firmly maintained that God gives no one his Spirit or grace apart from the external Word which goes before. We say this to protect ourselves from the enthusiasts, that is, the ‘spirits’ who boast that they have the Spirit apart from and before contact with the Word.<sup>4</sup>

In short: enthusiasm clings to Adam and his children from the beginning to the end of the world—fed and spread among them as poison by the old dragon...Therefore we should and must insist that God does not want to deal with us human beings, except by means of his external Word and sacrament. Everything that boasts of being from the Spirit apart from such a Word and sacrament is of the devil. For God even desired to appear to Moses first in the burning bush and by means of the spoken word.... John the Baptist was not conceived without Gabriel’s preceding Word, nor did he leap in his mother’s womb without Mary’s voice; and as St. Peter says: the prophets did not prophesy ‘by human will’ but ‘by the Holy Spirit,’ indeed, as ‘holy people of God.’ However, without the external Word, they were not holy.<sup>5</sup>

This “external Word” is the Ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, this Ministry of the Word is one, though the Word finds expression audibly in the preaching of the Gospel (sometimes designated in Lutheran theology as a Sacrament of Absolution) and finds visible expression in the

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, “Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 14-16,” *Luther's Works, Vol. 24*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>3</sup> “God has added to the Word of the Gospel as another communicative (δοτικὸν) means of salvation, the Sacraments, which constitute the visible Word.” Strictly speaking, there is but *one* means of salvation, which is distinguished as the *audible* and *visible* Word. John Andrew Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* IV, 3; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 522.

<sup>4</sup> *Smalcald Articles*, III: 8, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Smalcald Articles*, III: 8, 9-13.

<sup>6</sup> See *Augsburg Confession*, V.



## Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar.

With this understanding, then, the Word “in and with” the element of water in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and “in and with” the elements of bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Altar is, as the first point, the Word of command and promise spoken by Christ Jesus in the instituting of these Sacraments, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures. The Word of command is the imperative “do this” as Christ commanded, but the greater Word is the Word of promise in which Christ promises the gifts of grace, namely forgiveness, life and salvation, to each recipient. Moreover, it is not merely the historical words of Christ from Holy Writ called to mind in the giving and receiving of the Sacraments, but, as the second point, the Word as Word of promise proclaimed by the pastor, the called servant of the Word who administers the Sacrament, and heard by the person receiving the Sacrament. This “external Word,” as Luther calls it, is thus both the visible Word of Holy Baptism and Holy Supper as well as the audible Sacrament of preaching the Gospel, or the Holy Absolution. The Word of promise spoken by Christ is present “in and with” the words spoken by the preacher and received in the ears of the hearer.

In this way the Word is distinguished from the earthly forms of water, bread and wine, and human words, and yet in the ministry of the Word the earthly forms are united with the Word as one. The Word of promise is not separated from the earthly forms. To be washed in the water of Holy Baptism is to receive the Word of promise and the gifts attending that Word. To eat and drink the earthly forms of bread and wine is to eat and drink the Word of promise and the gifts attending the Word. To hear the words of the preacher, the words of Holy Absolution, is to hear the Word of promise and the gifts attending the Word.



Over and above all of this, however, it must be constantly emphasized that such a rich and multi-faceted understanding of the ministry of the Word exercised as written Word and audible/visible Word would have no meaning apart from the Incarnate Word. The benefits that accompany the Word are benefits attached solely to the person and work of Christ Jesus, the Incarnate Word who always accompanies His promises.

For this reason, when the Catechism confesses that Holy Baptism “works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation”<sup>7</sup> it is because of the Word “in and with” the water. That Word, ultimately, is Christ Jesus. As St. Paul writes, “For all of you who are baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”<sup>8</sup> It is because Christ the Word is truly present in and with the water that His benefits are present in the washing.

Again, when the Catechism confesses that the eating and drinking in the Sacrament of the Altar bestows forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, it is because of the Word in and with the eating and the drinking. That Word, ultimately, is Christ. “This is My Body.... This is My Blood...for you.”<sup>9</sup> St. Paul writes, “Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation (κοινωνία) in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?”<sup>10</sup> The Word present in the Sacrament is the Incarnate Word who in giving Himself gives His benefits of forgiveness, life and salvation.

Likewise, when the Catechism confesses that the Holy Absolution grants

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<sup>7</sup> *Small Catechism, The Sacrament of Holy Baptism* 5-6.

<sup>8</sup> Galatians 3:17.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 28:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26.

<sup>10</sup> I Corinthians 10:18.



forgiveness “from the pastor as from God Himself,” it is because of the presence of the Incarnate Word in and with the words of absolution. “He who hears you, hears Me.”<sup>11</sup>

The very fullness of the ministry of the Word—written, audible/visible Word—is that the Incarnate Word, Christ Jesus, comes to the recipient of the Word.

The chief article and foundation of the gospel is that before you take Christ as an example, you accept and recognize him as a gift, as a present that God has given you and that is your own. This means that when you see or hear [in the Scriptures] of Christ doing or suffering something, you do not doubt that Christ himself, with his deeds and suffering belongs to you. On this you may depend as surely as if you had done it yourself; indeed as if you were Christ himself.<sup>12</sup>

When you open the book containing the gospels and read or hear how Christ comes here or there, or how someone is brought to him, you should therein perceive the sermon or the gospel through which he is coming to you, or you are being brought to him. For the preaching of the gospel [including the administration of the Sacraments] is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or we being brought to him. When you see how he works, however, and how he helps everyone to whom he comes or who is brought to him, then rest assured that faith is accomplishing this in you and that he is offering your soul exactly the same sort of help and favor through the gospel.<sup>13</sup>

Now the ministry of the Word—written Word and audible/visible Word united with the Incarnate Word—is for faith, to faith.

The faith which alone deserves the name of Christian is this: if you believe unflinchingly that it is not only for Saint Peter and the saints that Christ is such a person, but also for you yourself—for you more than for all others. Your salvation does not reside in the fact that Christ is Christ for good reason, but that he is Christ for you and that he is yours.<sup>14</sup>

God becomes present and begins to live in us at the moment he creates true faith in us. Indeed, through such faith a Christian already enters into heaven. Luther argues as follows: ‘This is the true faith of Christ

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<sup>11</sup> Luke 10:16.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther, “A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels,” *Luther's Works, Vol. 35* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), p. 119.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>14</sup> Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ*, p. 188.



and in Christ, through which we become members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones (Eph 5:30). Therefore in Him we live, move, and have our being (Acts 17:28)...Christ and faith must be completely joined. We must simply be in heaven, and Christ must be, live, and work in us. But He lives and works in us, not speculatively or as an idea but in the most present and effective way.<sup>15</sup>

Faith, then, is the confidence not simply that Christ was or is, but that He is “for me” (*pro me*), that is, “when we believe that Christ has suffered for us and that for His sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal, life are given to us.”<sup>16</sup> Faith is also the confidence that Christ is “with me” (*in me*) “...a sure trust and firm acceptance in the heart. It takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself.”<sup>17</sup>

Such a faith, however, is not separate from the Word, especially the Incarnate Word, and the ministry of the Word. In Luther’s thought faith in Christ is at one and the same time the presence of Christ in faith. He calls this *fides Christi*.

The link between the believer and Christ, designated by the phrase *fides Christi*, is not the fruit of the mystical union between Christ and the faithful. It is by the Word that Christ is presented and revealed to human beings as saving reality. This does not exclude an intimate union between Christ and the faithful, a union without which the theme ‘joyous exchange’ would be unthinkable, but the role of the Word is essential to maintain the liberty of God and the personal character of the relationship between the faithful and Christ.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), p. 86. Simo Peura goes on to comment about this passage of Luther: “The above-quoted passages have caused great suspicion among Lutheran theologians, especially among those who have represented a so-called neo-Kantianism in this century. Luther’s view of *unio cum Christo* has not been accepted in its true ontological sense.... The result of this denial is that Lutheran theology has lost some of those characteristics.” *Union with Christ*, p. 86.

<sup>16</sup> *Augsburg Confession IV*.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Luther. “Lectures on Galatians,” *Luther’s Works, Vol. 26*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), pp. 129-130. “When the presence of Christ in faith is interpreted as ‘ontic’ or ‘real,’ it does not entail, however, a philosophical ontology...Luther himself warns of rationalizing the idea of Christ’s presence: ‘But how He is present—this is beyond our thought (*non est cogitabile*): for there is darkness, as I have said.’” Risto Saarinen, “The Presence of God in Luther’s Theology,” *The Lutheran Quarterly*, VIII, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 6.

<sup>18</sup> Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ*, p. 77.



The ‘I’—we call it the ‘new’ I—lives (in sharp antithesis to the old, wholly and thoroughly non-communicating, turned in upon itself I-Being [*Ich-Sein*], a hellish distance-closed self-communication) by and in a wholly and thoroughly *communicative being*. [*kommunikativen Sein*].

In the Being of Jesus Christ God gives Himself to us without reservation and limit, wholly and thoroughly, with all that He is and does, has and can do: ‘He gave His dearest Treasure,’ ‘Right dearly it has cost Him.’<sup>19</sup>

Thus, while it is necessary to separate Christ, Word, Faith and Christian for the sake of doctrinal clarity, the reality is that there is a simultaneity among them. Christ, Word, Faith and Christian are considered as a simultaneous whole. The Word—written, audible/visible—is always considered together with the Incarnate Word. The ministry of this Word—Incarnate, written, audible/visible—is for faith to faith. Yet faith is simultaneously the means by which a person is made Christian and the confident recognition that Christ the Incarnate Word has come graciously to be united with that person of faith. In this way it is only such a person of faith who recognizes and receives the earthly forms of the ministry of the Word as the means of union with the Incarnate Word. “The act of faith [for Luther] takes believers out of themselves and sets them in Christ.”<sup>20</sup> In this incredibly rich simultaneity music finds a place.

7. To me he said: ‘Stay close to me,  
I am your rock and castle.  
Your ransom I myself will be;  
For you I strive and wrestle;  
For I am yours, and you are mine,  
And where I am you may remain;  
The foe shall not divide us.

8. “Though he will shed my precious blood  
Of life me thus bereaving,  
All this I suffer for our good;  
Be steadfast and believing.  
Life will from death the vict’ry win;  
My innocence shall bear your sin;  
And you are blest forever.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Bayer, *Gott als Autor*, p. 120. The hymn quotation is from Luther's hymn, *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein*. “Dear Christians, One and All. Rejoice.”

<sup>20</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), p. 216. Pannenberg offers an extended discussion of how this union with Christ by and in faith impacts the Lutheran understanding of justification; cf. pp. 211-236.

<sup>21</sup> Oswald Bayer finds the simultaneity of Christ, Word, Faith and Christian thoroughly expressed in the text of this Luther hymn, *Nun freut euch*. “This [union with Christ and the Christian] took place, as



*The Office of Christ the Word—An Introduction*

“The Word of God is living and active,” observes the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>22</sup> In the book of the prophet Isaiah it is noted that the Word goes forth to accomplish the purpose for which it is sent.<sup>23</sup> The Office of Christ (*Officium Christi*) has traditionally outlined this active, purpose-accomplishing ministry of the Word.

The Office of Christ has been further understood by the dogmaticians as being threefold in nature: prophet, priest and king.<sup>24</sup> This dogmatic tradition has not been without criticism,<sup>25</sup> nevertheless, the tradition of understanding Christ’s Office in a threefold manner has the advantage of uniting both the historical life of Jesus with his calling as Messiah, a calling revealed fully by the cross and resurrection. What is made known on Easter reveals what was hidden beforehand in Jesus’ earthly ministry. It is in this same way that music, when considered in the light of the Office of Christ as prophet, priest and king, serves to make known the person and work of Jesus the Christ as that person and work are hidden under the earthly forms of the Word. The musician

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stanzas 7 and 8 make dramatically clear. in a *fröhlich Wechsel und Streit*—in an exchange [*Wechsel*] of human sin and divine righteousness, that at the same time is a *Streit*, a battle [*Kampf*] with the power of the old world...The forgiveness of sin is not only, as according to Schleiermacher, a clarification and strengthening of a God-consciousness, but rather is, in reality, the conscience reaching forth and taking hold of the victory over the power of the hostility between God and humanity.” Bayer, *Gott als Autor*, p. 122.

<sup>22</sup> Hebrews 4:12.

<sup>23</sup> Isaiah 55:11.

<sup>24</sup> “Gerhard was the first to treat this entire doctrine [of the threefold Office of Christ] under a separate head; before his day it was discussed in connection with other doctrines, usually under the head of *justification*; and the form, too, in which the doctrine is now set forth, appears for the first time complete (though brief in outline) in Gerhard.” Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, pp. 337-338.

<sup>25</sup> “In [Jesus’] earthly existence he was not a priest, nor was he a king. To call him a prophet does justice best to his earthly ministry, but even that levels down what is specific in his coming and message, aware though he was of being in the prophet tradition.” Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 2* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), p. 445. For an extended discussion of the criticism over the threefold understanding of the Office of Christ, see Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 2*, pp. 444-448.



makes known the person and work of Christ while at the same time praising this in music Christ for His person and work.

Furthermore, it is important to maintain that this Word, this Word in music, is not a free-floating Word. It is preached and heard by human mouths and ears. It is given and received by human hands. The *Officium Christi* is fully united with the Office of the Holy Ministry of the Word and those human beings who inhabit this Office, including those human beings who compose, perform and hear the music of this Office. The Lutheran musician inhabits the *Predigtamt* and by the art of music fashions it as a *Lobamt*, an Office of praise. As the historical survey of Part One outlined, the Lutheran aesthetic in music suffered when the musician was separated from the *Predigtamt*, but thrived in those persons and eras when both the theologian/preacher and the church musician were united in one Office/*Amt*.

Finally, the use of the doctrine concerning the Office of Christ serves an advantage for this discussion of the role of music in the Church. Under this threefold Office of Christ the phenomenon of music can be more fully explicated as Divine gift within the Christological tradition.

### *The Prophetic Office—Music as Proclamation*

There is no other means through which the proclamatory authority of this Word, the extramundane origin of this Voice, the sacredness of this Text, and also the inviting, appealing nearness of the Message could be witnessed to more distinctly in a symbol of sound than through the reciting tone.... The Word vested in musical tone exercises a stronger regulative power than the spoken Word.<sup>26</sup>

The formula [‘Sing and Say’] comes forth often with Luther.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), p. 271.

<sup>27</sup> The phrase “Sing and Say” appears in the first stanza of Luther's Christmas hymn, *From Heaven Above*: “From heaven above to earth I come, To bear Good News to every home. Glad tidings of great



...Singing and Saying is *one* event—and certainly one *sound event* [*Klang-Geschehen*]. There is one sound event, which has two dimensions: the dimension of the Word and the dimension of music. During the sounding neither can become separated from the other.... A song does not exist in the hymnal. In the hymnal there is the text and the melody. Rather, a song exists only during the sounding. There the singing sounds as saying, the saying as singing.<sup>28</sup>

The prophetic Office of Christ exercises itself in the attributes of the Word—Incarnate, audible/visible, written. Lutheran dogmaticians have enumerated four attributes of the Word in connection with the written Word of Holy Scripture, but these attributes carry implications for the Word in its fullest Lutheran meaning. These attributes are: authority, sufficiency, perspicuity, and efficacy.

When Jesus of Nazareth preached and taught during the days of His earthly prophetic ministry, He did so in a way that His hearers said of Him that “He teaches as one who has authority.”<sup>29</sup> Yet Jesus Himself would declare, “My teaching is not My own. It comes from Him who sent Me.”<sup>30</sup>

There is authority in the Call to the prophetic Office, in which Jesus had been sent by the Father. Jesus' authority rested on His Call to that Office. This authority of Christ's Office was then conferred upon the apostles He had chosen. “As the Father has sent Me, I now send you.”<sup>31</sup> The authority of the apostles then rested upon their Call to the prophetic Office of Christ.

Accordingly, the Lutheran Church confesses, “It is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper call [*rite*

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joy I bring, Whereof I now will say and sing.” (*Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her, ich bring euch gute neue Mär, der guten Mär bring ich so viel, davon ich sing'n und sagen will.*)

<sup>28</sup> Christa Reich, *Evangelium: Klingendes Wort* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1997), p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew 7:28-29.

<sup>30</sup> John 7:16.

<sup>31</sup> John 21:21.



*vocatus*].”<sup>32</sup> A Call to the ministry of the Word insures that the one who proclaims the Word in the Church is doing so in the stead and by the command of Christ. The Call provides certainty for the hearers.

In this same way a congregation’s chief musician or kantor also should be properly called to this Office, that the authority of the musical preacher of the Word might be publicly recognized. For as there is a unity of the Word and music in the Church’s song, so there is also a unity in the prophetic Office exercised by preacher and musician.

The Cantor in his officiating in the Divine Service, weaves together Holy Scripture and the *de tempore* Order from the Agenda. The Preacher is also bound to these two great objectives. Consequently the church musician is protected from the whims of many preachers, while the preacher as the officiant [*Amtsperson*] of the office of praise [*Lobamt*] is given the definitive helper, with whom he can escape his isolation from musician and congregation which is identified with the perversion and abrogation of the *Lobamt*. The musician serves the *Lobamt* with his music making in the Divine Service, and has a portion in the *Lobamt* when his liturgical music is clean [*rein*] and joyous [*lustig*]<sup>33</sup>—for the congregation intelligible—and by free, non-biblical text subjects the music is grounded in the Gospel. The Church Order promotes Scriptural conformity and intelligibility, because the *Lobamt* continues to work out the preaching of God’s Word.<sup>33</sup>

The first attribute, authority, leads directly to the second, sufficiency. The authority of the ministry of the Word—singing and saying—gives expression to the sufficiency of the Word.

We by no means say that the Scriptures are perfect in such a sense that all things which are necessary to be known for faith and practice are contained in the Scriptures, literally and in so many words, but some of them in substance, others literally; or, what is the same thing, that some are contained in them explicitly and others by implication, so that by

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<sup>32</sup> *Augsburg Confession* XIV.

<sup>33</sup> Christoph Wetzel, *Leiturgia, Handbuch des Evangelischen Gottesdienstes, Band IV* (Kassel: Johannes Stauda Verlag, 1961), p. 329.



legitimate and undeniable inference they can be deduced from them.<sup>34</sup>

The sufficiency of the Scriptures in matters of salvation in Christ places upon the preacher the duty to exercise the highest art in crafting the proclamation of the Gospel, so that the “all things” may be known. The musician, who also occupies the prophetic Office of Christ, likewise must exercise the highest art of the musician’s craft of composition and performance.

Music which fails to probe its sphere unceasingly and to strive for artistic perfection does not take its intended role in creation seriously. This applies especially to church music.... Luther welcomed and promoted music in every form. Therefore he did not restrain music from bringing its special musical powers and elements into play when it joined with the Word. To cultivate only monodic singing and to deny the development of polyphonic music was for Luther not only a sign of a deficient artistic culture but also evidence of a wrong theology. In the ontological character of music we find the obligation and the possibility of developing it into the highest art.<sup>35</sup>

Music, as a gift of God’s creation, has its uniquely own sufficiency that must be fully proclaimed. Then the sufficiency of music and the sufficiency of Scripture, when united in proclamation, exhibit the fullest expression of the sufficiency to know all things necessary to the salvation of the hearer, to know them in their simplicity and to ponder them in their complexity.

Since the salvation of the hearer—the hearer of preaching, the hearer of musical proclamation—is at stake, this sufficiency must also bear a perspicuity, a clarity that renders the proclamation accessible to the hearer. In this attribute as well, the calling of the musician/preacher is an expression of Christ’s prophetic Office. With Jesus’ use of parables and sermons He made known the mysteries of the

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<sup>34</sup> John Gerhard, *Loci Theologici* II, 286; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 66.

<sup>35</sup> Oskar Söhngen, “Church Music as Art,” *Festschrift Theodore Hoelty-Nickel* (Valparaiso: Valparaiso University, 1967), p. 29.



kingdom of heaven.<sup>36</sup> By His questions and replies Jesus would lead His hearers beyond their present point of understanding to a deeper, fuller grasp of the Gospel that He was called and sent to proclaim in His prophetic Office.<sup>37</sup> At the same time He would cloak His teaching in darkness for the purpose of judgment, leaving it hidden for some, while revealed for others.<sup>38</sup> It is incumbent upon the musician who serves in Christ's Office to exercise a discerning use of musical proclamation.

Purely artistic and professional training [for the church musician] is, from the very beginning of the course, also directed toward life. It always takes into consideration the world around us, the world around the work of art as well as its place in life. While every work of art is a world perfect in itself, a world which carries its worth in itself and accordingly is able to communicate this worth, this work of art, church music, as a rule possesses a specific function in addition. Of all arts, church music has least use for the slogan 'art for art's sake'.... Church music training cannot take place without a continuous relationship to the world around us and to life, and, to be sure, not only to the life of the church but also to that of the world. Thus the training in church music actually proceeds with open doors and windows much more than any other musical training; and it is always open for the world and turned toward the world.<sup>39</sup>

Perspicuity in musical proclamation, as Christ in His prophetic Office has shown, demands that the musician "meet the hearers where they are." Yet at the same time, a musician who is faithful to the calling of the prophetic Office of Christ will not leave the hearers "where they are," but will assist them by the exercise of the Office to grow in their perception and praise of the mysteries of salvation proclaimed in the singing and saying. The musical pedagogy of Walter and Rhau, as well as the arias/songs of Lutheran Pietism reflected this attribute of the Word.

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<sup>36</sup> E.g., see the parables recorded in the 13th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

<sup>37</sup> E.g., Jesus conversations with Nicodemus in John 3. with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. with Martha at Lazarus' death in John 11 and with Pontius Pilate in John 18.

<sup>38</sup> E.g., the Bread of Life discourse in John 6; cf. Luke 8:10.

<sup>39</sup> Karl Ferdinand Müller. "Church Music Instruction in Germany," *Cantors at the Crossroads* (St. Louis:



Finally the efficacy of this proclamation, with its attributes of authority, sufficiency and perspicuity, is that faith is created and sustained in the hearer “when and where it pleases God.”<sup>40</sup>

When we seriously ponder the Word, hear it, and put it to use, such is its power that it never departs without fruit. It always awakens hearts and minds. For this Word is not idle or dead, but effective and living.<sup>41</sup>

There is, then, an inner integrity to music in the ministry of the Word through which Christ Jesus exercises His prophetic Office. This integrity, first of all, is that the music not only sets the outer features of a text of the Word, as though it were enough for the musical setting to serve as a tone poem for the divine Word. More importantly for the purpose of proclamation, the music sets the sense of the text, “the purpose for which it is sent forth.”<sup>42</sup>

Music, like its twin sister preaching, has both a proclamatory function as well as an interpretive function. There is both homiletics and hermeneutics in musical proclamation. By the craft of musical composition a composer sets the Word with simplicity or complexity, with whatever art of melody and harmony, tempo and dynamics, form and instrumentation as that text inspires in the composer, for the purpose of proclaiming the Word with the meaning of the proclamation inherent in the Word. In setting the text the composer, as minister of the Word within the prophetic Office of Christ, is guided and disciplined by the parameters of integrity for the sake of the faith of the hearer.

Music in God’s house can be majestic, powerful, monumental, but it cannot be bombastic, pompous, gaudy and pretentious. It can be

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Concordia Publishing House, 1967), p. 189.

<sup>40</sup> *Augsburg Confession V.*

<sup>41</sup> *Large Catechism, The Ten Commandments* 101.

<sup>42</sup> Isaiah 55:11.



energetic, fearless and bold but should not be flighty and importunate. It can be as simple and unaffected as you like but it cannot be banal and trivial. It can be filled to the brim with warmth but it cannot be dripping with sentimental emotion or affected pathos. It can be intimate and give expression to care and pain, but it cannot be given to brokenness and despair, as if it had no hope. It must possess the purity and chastity, the humility and modesty which are borne together with holiness in the courts of the Lord. Consequently it is never merely a question about singing *at* the Divine Service without always asking about singing *in* the Divine Service, about the Divine Service's own song.<sup>43</sup>

The accuracy of setting the Word in music is not complete without also setting the meaning of the Word, ultimately the Christological meaning of any text from the Scriptures. The music makes known what is hidden, what is implicit, that is, what the Word reveals Christ (*was Christi treibt*).

Perhaps one of the finer moments of musical hermeneutics is in Johann Sebastian Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. The chorale melodies in *Oratorio* set the full Gospel of the Incarnation without saying/singing a word. This is especially true for the final chorale. The text of that chorale—"...Death, devil, sin and hell are thoroughly defeated..."—is set to the melody of the Passion Chorale *Herzlich tut mich verlangen*, so that the hearer is brought from Christmas-Epiphany to the fulfillment on Good Friday and the impending Resurrection, all by means of the music alone. This musical hermeneutics of Bach, like his equally moving Passions and the B minor Mass, is a clear expression of the Lutheran aesthetic through the union of Word and music.

The musician—composer, performer, hearer—must be, like the preacher (as in the previous paragraph, like Bach the preacher), "a theologian of the cross."<sup>44</sup>

A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is. This is clear: He who does

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<sup>43</sup> Aulén, *Högmässans förnylse*, p. 221.

<sup>44</sup> Luther. "The Heidelberg Disputation," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, p. 52.



not know Christ does not know God hidden in suffering. Therefore he prefers works to suffering, glory to the cross, strength to weakness, wisdom to folly, and, in general, good to evil.... God can be found only in suffering and the cross.<sup>45</sup>

Beyond this, however, the efficacy of proclamation in the prophetic Office of Christ, it is not enough to proclaim, verbally and musically, that Christ is. The proclamation must sing and say that Christ is “for me” (*pro me*). The hearer apprehends by faith the message of salvation proclaimed in the singing and saying.

Not only the sermon but also the ‘notes make the text live.’ Therefore Luther wishes the sung Word of God instituted at the most difficult sector of the Gospel’s battle against the world and the devil—namely, wherever Satan assails the believer with temptation... ‘Temptation alone teaches us to pay heed to the Word... Therefore, when you feel dejected and sadness threatens to overwhelm you, say: ‘Arise! I must play a song to my Lord Jesus on the organ.’<sup>46</sup>

### *The Priestly Office—Music as Gift and Restoration*

The priestly Office of Christ is encompassed by the significant and definitive Lutheran doctrine of justification, *die Haupt Artikel*. Within this protean doctrine the work of Jesus Christ as mediator of the New Covenant has significance for the subject at hand. Though Lutheran Christology emphasizes the “once for all” nature of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, there is also an emphasis on the on-going nature of Christ’s priestly work,

...so that no fool, having once accepted the gift, will think himself already contented and secure. But He does not want us to halt in what has been received, but rather to draw near from day to day so that we may be fully transformed into Christ. His righteousness is perpetual and sure; there is no change, there is no lack, for He Himself is the Lord of all. Therefore, whenever Paul preached faith in Christ, he did so with the utmost care to proclaim that righteousness is not only

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<sup>45</sup> *Luther’s Works, Vol. 31*, p. 53.

<sup>46</sup> Söhngen, “Church Music as Art,” *Festschrift Theodore Hoelty-Nickel*, p. 29. The concluding quotation is by Martin Luther.



through Him or from Him, but even that it is in Him. He therefore draws us into Himself, and transforms us, and places us as if in hiding 'until the wrath passes away.<sup>47</sup>

Christ's mediatorial work, according to Luther, is at once through Him (*per Christum*) as well as from Him (*ab Christo*) and yet at the same time directed toward Him (*in Christum*). The Christian, that is, the person who by faith is united with Christ, cannot be content with a once-apprehended reconciliation with God. Rather, by faith the believer matures into the length and breadth and height and depth of Christ.<sup>48</sup>

Music united with the Word—the Incarnate Word, the audible/visible Word, the written Word—serves this mediatorial “now” of the priestly Office of Christ. In Christ's priestly Office the Word awakens and sustains faith, a faith which embraces the reconciliation that is offered in and through Christ,<sup>49</sup> and for such a reconciliation-embracing faith, knowledge is an essential element.

*Explicit* faith is that by which the thing to be believed, although it be not clearly known, or although all the things in it that are cognizable be not intelligibly apprehended, yet is in itself known distinctly, or in such a manner that it can be distinguished from other objects.<sup>50</sup>

Music assists such explicit knowledge, as outlined in the previous section concerning proclamation in Christ's prophetic Office. Music makes explicit the implicit things of Christ's mediation. The musical setting of the Word of promise from Christ, the performer's musical expression and the receptivity of the hearer all serve to hone the discerning of that which “may not be intelligibly apprehended,” and yet still may be apprehended no less surely by the hearer at another level of being.

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<sup>47</sup> Martin Luther. “Against Latomus,” *Luther's Works*, Vol. 32 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), p. 235.

<sup>48</sup> Ephesians 3:18.

<sup>49</sup> Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 440.

<sup>50</sup> John William Baier, *Compendium Theologiæ Positivæ*, 503; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 415.



The Word as a texted Word for the music is integral for the concept of knowledge in faith. Martin Luther and his heirs are outspoken in condemnation of “enthusiasm,” an immediate access to knowledge apart from the external Word. Music must be texted, or text referenced, in order to serve a knowledge for faith according to the priestly Office of Christ. The theologian, Peter Brunner, draws a strong conclusion that music in the church must be texted:

We do not consider it appropriate to present music which is detached from its association with the word as a component of congregational worship... This confinement of music in worship to word-bound music by no means precludes that the compositions played at the opening and at the conclusion of worship may, and perhaps as a rule also should, be independent musical compositions, which are entirely detached from a text. However, these compositions should not be heard in the course of the worship service.<sup>51</sup>

It has been my thesis that a conclusion such as this author suggests is unnecessarily limiting regarding “wordless” music which may not be “Word-less.” Music has the ability to call to mind the texted Word in human memory and by its art to bestow a *harmonia* that touches the mind and soul along with the spoken Word of peace. Luther’s *singen und sagen* is not so rigid as to insist that music must always have a text. The Lutheran *cantus-firmus* tradition is singularly eloquent concerning music’s ability to call to mind the texted Word. Furthermore, Luther’s craftsmanship with the church modes or Melancthon’s appreciation of *harmonia* testify to Lutheranism’s Word-richness in music without words.

It must be said simultaneously, however, that faith is not merely knowledge of Jesus Christ and His work. In addition to knowledge there is the element of assent.

For justifying faith is the receptive organ and, as it were, the hand of the poor sinner, by which he applies and takes to himself, lays hold of, and

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<sup>51</sup> Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, p. 276.



possesses those things which are proffered in the free promise of the Gospel. God, the supreme Monarch, extends from heaven the hand of grace, obtained by the merit of Christ, and in it offers salvation. The sinner, in the abyss of misery, receives, as a beggar, in his hand of faith, what is thus offered to him. The offer and the reception are correlatives. Therefore the hand of faith, which seizes and appropriates the offered treasure, corresponds to the hand of grace which offers the treasure of righteousness and salvation.<sup>52</sup>

Music serves to apprehend, to make one's own, the gifts offered to faith by the mediating High Priest, Christ Jesus. Music is not a Sacrament, that is, music does not have the command and promise of Christ attached to it so that music itself bears the divine gifts of grace. It is music's role in and with the ministry of the Word (Incarnate, Scriptural, Proclaimed, Sacramental) that creates the apprehending faith of the believer.

Schlink's question: 'Can the music of the faithful not also be without words as an echo of the work of God and as a testimony for the faithful and a strengthening of their joy as children of God' can under all circumstances be answered affirmatively. The wordless music can effect no faith, but it does have another function to fulfill in its spiritual work among the congregation, with the substantial capacity of music and its work which has been given among men. In addition, the hearing of the Word can sink deeper in its work through a subsequent music. It is able to contribute through an inner clarification and decisiveness in the heart. This religio-psychological work of music is not to be lightly esteemed, although it only helps and no decisive significance can be attached to it.<sup>53</sup>

Once again, there is a hesitancy to ascribe very much to music without a text in its use according to Christ's sacerdotal Office. Wordy preachers/theologians who do not recognize that it is not the sheer number of words which creates efficacy, likewise do not recognize that "wordless" is not the same as "Word-less." Indeed it is not the music itself, but Word-embraced music, that is, the *Verbum musicum* which serves the

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<sup>52</sup> David Hollaz, *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum*, 1173; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 420.

<sup>53</sup> René H. Wallau, *Die Musik in ihrer Gottesbeziehung: Zur theologischen Deutung der Musik*



Holy Ministry of the Incarnate Word, who makes “wordless” music useful to His Office. Thus the Word in and with the music need not be text-bound to fashion an apprehending faith.

Indeed I plainly judge, and do not hesitate to affirm, that except for theology there is no art that could be put on the same level with music, since except for theology [music] alone produces what otherwise only theology can do, namely, a calm and joyful disposition. Manifest proof [of this is the fact] that the devil, the creator of saddening cares and disquieting worries, takes flight at the sound of music almost as he takes flight at the word of theology...my love for music, which often has quickened me and liberated me from great vexations, is abundant and overflowing.<sup>54</sup>

Luther’s “almost” in comparing theology and music ensures that the ministry of the Word is kept primary overall. Still, wordless music is not “Word-less” when the music serves as anamnesis. The music itself may not be texted, but the same music remembers, calls to the hearer’s mind, and in its own Word-united art bestows the Word of promise so that the outcome is the same as if it were texted, as Luther writes so strongly above in his letter to the composer Senfl.

The third element of a true faith, as the Lutheran dogmaticians have outlined these elements of saving faith, is the greatest of the three: confidence, *fiducia*.<sup>55</sup> This confidence (following from knowledge and assent) resides in the Christian’s “different faculties.” Baier appreciates the way that faith as *fiducia* is created and instilled on a number of human levels. Subsequent Lutheran theologians have given priority to the intellectual level over the affective (while the Pietists generally gave priority to the affective over the intellectual). Intellect and will—a will “free” in faith to pursue

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(Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1927), p. 125.

<sup>54</sup> Martin Luther, “To Louis Senfl, October 4, 1530,” *Luther’s Works Vol. 49* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), pp. 427-428.

<sup>55</sup> John William Baier. *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*. 508; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 414.



understanding—are mentioned specifically in Baier. Music plays upon these faculties, together with human feelings as Luther recognized, in the ministry of the Word, producing this confidence.

Here it must suffice to discuss the benefit [*Usus*] of this great art. But even that transcends the greatest eloquence of the most eloquent, because of the infinite variety of its forms and benefits. We can mention only one point (which experience confirms), namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. She is a mistress and governess of those human emotions [*Affectum*]<sup>56</sup>—to pass over the animals—which as masters govern men and more often overwhelm them. No greater commendation than this can be found—at least not by us. For whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate—and who could number all these masters of the human heart, namely, the emotions, inclinations, and affections that impel men to evil or good?—what more effective means than music could you find... Therefore, we have so many hymns and Psalms where message and music [*Sermo et vox*] join to move the listener's soul, while in other living beings [e.g., birds] and bodies [instruments] music remains a language without words [*Sine sermone gesticulatur*].<sup>56</sup>

Too many dogmaticians hardly recognize the emotional dimension of faith, to which music is so important<sup>57</sup> “For everything that provides comfort—everything that offers the favor and grace of God to those who have transgressed the law—is and is called the gospel in the strict sense. It is good, joyous news...”<sup>58</sup> “Everything that offers the favor and grace of God”—this is the ministry of the Word, ultimately the ministry of Christ as High Priest who gives Himself as grace and favor to the person of faith by means of the faith created by the Word. As music is united in and with the Word—Incarnate, audible/visible—music truly “cheers.” Music is “good, joyous news,” as Luther goes on to say in the Preface to Georg Rhau’s “Joyful Symphonies”

<sup>56</sup> Martin Luther, “Preface to Georg Rhau's *Symphoniae Iucundae*,” *Luther's Works*, Vol. 53 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 323.

<sup>57</sup> *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration*, I, 24.

<sup>58</sup> *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration*, I, 21.



(*Symphoniae iucundae*):

For whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate—and who could number all these masters of the human heart, namely, the emotions, inclinations, and affections that impel men to evil or good?—what more effective means than music could you find... Therefore, we have so many hymns and Psalms where message and music [*Sermo et vox*] join to move the listener's soul, while in other living beings [e.g., birds] and bodies [instruments] music remains a language without words [*Sine sermone gesticulatur*].<sup>59</sup>

This discussion of Christ's mediatorial work in His sacerdotal Office cannot be complete without addressing the work of intercession. This work of intercession is intimately related to Christ's work of reconciliation. As St. Paul writes, "Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."<sup>60</sup>

By the Spirit, Christ's intercession as High Priest is likewise the Christian's own intercession, as the Christian is incorporated into the royal priesthood.<sup>61</sup> "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit."<sup>62</sup> The "groans which words cannot express" can be expressed in music. As noted in the earlier portion of this chapter, both the experience of the cross of Christ and the experience of the resurrection of Christ that are present in musical expression through union with Christ are likewise the intercessions of Christ Jesus and His Spirit in and with the Christian.

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<sup>59</sup> *Luther's Works, Vol. 53*, p. 323.

<sup>60</sup> Romans 8:34.

<sup>61</sup> I Peter 2:9.

<sup>62</sup> Romans 8:26-27.



who in Christ is a member of the royal priesthood. The Christian priest “groans” through music the intercession of lament and praise to God. Once again, it is the ministry of the Word. For when the Christian says and sings to God, yes, when the Christian “groans” to God through music, what God has first said and sung to the Christian—“groaned” in the Christian musician by His Spirit—then the Christian sings and says what is most true and right.

*The Regal Office—Music and Order and Freedom*

The role of music at the hands of Christ, who exercises His Office as King, functions in the simultaneously dual expressions of order and freedom. Music serves the function of order as Christ is King governing “all the works of God in general, or all creatures, visible, invisible, corporeal, incorporeal, animate, inanimate, rational, irrational.”<sup>63</sup> As freedom, music expresses the regal Office of Christ in what the dogmaticians call “the kingdom of grace”—“the collecting, growing, adorning, and preserving of the Church.”<sup>64</sup> These are not two different kingdoms—a kingdom of power and a kingdom of grace—but two expressions of the one ministry of the Word, exercised by Christ as King through human agency; particularly for this discussion, the agency of the musician.

In music there comes to pass in the order of sounds a reflection of the order of God, a reflected acknowledgment of the divine commandment in the explication and acknowledgment of the rules concerning the movement of sound. However, the setting together of cosmic law and God’s exacting Law or the blurring of God’s order with the world’s order, as in Platonism and Christian-Platonist music theory, remains

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<sup>63</sup> John Andrew Quenstedt. *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* III. 265; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 374.

<sup>64</sup> David Hollaz. *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum*, 763; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 374.



doubtful and undefined.<sup>65</sup>

“Doubtful and undefined,” perhaps, unless considered in the exercise of Christ’s regal Office. As noted in Chapter 2, Praetorius did not “blur God’s order” but neither did he separate it entirely from the order which Platonism attempted to explain (See pages 64-65). He recognized that in the one Christ, the crucified and risen King, there is a relationship between the music of heaven and earth, that the one is heard in the other. Christ reigns over all things, visible and invisible, and thus by virtue of His regal Office He is the unifying person between the laws of nature (“the world’s order”), including the laws governing the movement of sound, that is, the laws of music, and the ineffable Law of the invisible God (“God’s order”). The unity of the orders is not as the Platonists suggest, that music is the visible manifestation of the invisible divine order. Rather the order in music and the order of the cosmos are the exercising of the one regal Office of Christ.

The Christological tradition among Lutherans, following Luther, avoids the distinctions of visible and invisible (*e.g.*, the visible and invisible Church), inner and outer (*e.g.*, inner grace in an outer form) and higher and lower (*e.g.*, earthly forms as manifestations of higher, heavenly order). Rather, from the personal union of the human and divine in Christ there follows a union of the heavenly and earthly in Christ.

The final ordering of creatures to the manifestation of Jesus Christ presupposes that creatures already have the origin of their existence and nature in the Son. Otherwise the final summing up of all things in the Son (Eph. 1:10) would be external to the things themselves, so that it would not be the definitive fulfillment of their own distinctive being. If, however, the creatures have their origin in the eternal Son or Logos, then as creatures aware of themselves they will be alienated from themselves so long as they do not perceive and receive the law of their own nature in this Logos. Thus we read in the prologue to John: ‘The world was made by him, yet the world knew him not’ (1:10b). This

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<sup>65</sup> Edmund Schlink, *Zum Theologischen Problem der Musik* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1945), p. 16.



situation is presupposed in the event of the incarnation and is the basis of the statement that follows in v. 11 that in the incarnation the Logos came to his own 'possession.'<sup>66</sup>

Such "creatures" include music, for music does not exist in a void. It is, as noted above, the movement of sound going out from the human creaturely voice, or creaturely instruments of human beings, and is then received by the creaturely ears of the human listener. The order necessary for this movement of sound, including the order of human beings involved in the creating, performing and hearing of music, springs from the order exercised by regal Office of Christ Jesus.

Music, as an expression of Christ's regal Office, involves

the inner-determined orders of moving sound. Though these orders are not merely the outer form of music, still without these orders there is no music. The order is heard within the structure of the music. It manifests itself in the tonal system, key, rhythm (meter, tempo and rhythmic organization within meter and tempo: the 'respiration' of music, Hugo Riemann) and in the polyphonic harmony—which is listed last since the arrangement of many parts/voices is not necessary to the way music is heard, and is a relatively late development in history. Considering tonal system, key and polyphony together in the designation 'harmony,' then the order of music is found in harmony and rhythm.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, the exercise of Christ's regal Office by order is not limited to the spatially defined order of moving sound, but also includes the chronological order of the development of music over the span of history. For the Christ who is "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End" encompasses all of time within His Office as it is exercised in any given moment.

Singing has followed the Christian Divine Service from the beginning. It has not entered the Divine Service as an appendage but as an essential component. In the Church's growth through the centuries there is found music of an excellent sort, intimately bound together

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<sup>66</sup> Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 25. Cf. Luther on creation, Martin Luther, "Table Talk," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 54 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 377.

<sup>67</sup> Schlink, *Zum Theologischen Problem der Musik*, p. 5.



with the liturgical texts. The Lutheran Reformation produced a great, lively interest for the church music question.... The endeavor has had a double aim: in part toward the preservation of traditional music, and in part toward new creations.<sup>68</sup>

[Church music renewal] has been able to gather inspiration and life-giving impulses from the music of the Reformation era, simultaneously declaring that a musical renewal must stand open before the craft of perpetual, on-going new creation.<sup>69</sup>

The calling of the musician—composer, performer, hearer—is set within the spatial-temporal order of the regal Office of Christ, who governs all things by His Word.

Having outlined the role of music concerning order in the exercise of Christ's regal Office, it must at the same time be emphasized that there is also freedom in this regal Office. This freedom finds expression among human beings in

the yearning of humanity for deliverance/redemption from existence (*Dasein*) in this world—the yearning for the putting off of our oppression by the people and things of this world. Humanity desires to be free from the concrete distress of the land, the thistle, the sweat, the distress of the wars and defeats, and will free itself in the objectification of subjectivity—of its pains and pleasures—in the self-outpouring act of creating a new cosmos.<sup>70</sup>

In the existence of this “yearning” on the part of humanity, the regal Office of Christ is exercised by the means of grace, the ministry of the audible/visible, written Word in which Christ Jesus, the Incarnate Word, collects and prospers His Church on earth.<sup>71</sup> By this exercise of grace in and through the Church, Christ Jesus sets people free from bondage to the order of this world.<sup>72</sup> “Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of the world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its

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<sup>68</sup> Aulén, *Högmässans förnyelse*, p. 40.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>70</sup> Schlink, *Zum Theologischen Problem der Musik*, p. 16.

<sup>71</sup> Hollaz, *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum*, 763; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p. 374.

<sup>72</sup> Galatians 4:3-5. 9.



rules?”<sup>73</sup>

In Christ the musician participates in this freedom of the regal Office of Christ, “creating” in Christ that which is new, as the Christian person has become new in Christ. This new music is free from bondage to the order of sound, ancient or modern. It is a freedom in Christ, however, who by His Office has made all things new. It is not mere anarchy; it is Christian freedom.

Now both order and freedom remain united in the Office of the one Christ. Though mutually exclusive, the one structuring, the other liberating, yet in Christ’s Office they remain united. For the musician in Christ, who exercises this calling as musician—composer, performer, hearer—within the simultaneous order/freedom of the regal Office of Christ, there is, consequently, the experience of tension. Martin Luther’s famous couplet concerning the freedom of the Christian is appropriate for the musician who lives out this calling within the tension of order and freedom. “The Christian is a perfectly free lord, subject to none; the Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant, subject to all.”<sup>74</sup>

A tension-free music has lost ‘orthodox feeling,’ that is, it has lost the truly intimate [*verklighetsnära*] realism which characterizes the salvation drama itself as the Christian life is lived under the conditions of earthly life. But where this truly intimate realism remains—it cannot be emphasized strongly enough—the sound of praise [*lovprisningens ton*] is the foundation tone which supports and permeates the music in so far as this truthfulness shall have full right to dwell in Christ’s Church.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Colossians 2:20.

<sup>74</sup> Luther, “The Freedom of the Christian,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 31, p. 334.

<sup>75</sup> Aulén, *Högmässans förnyelse*, p. 225.



## *Coda*

*It is not without reason that the fathers and prophets  
wanted nothing else to be associated as closely with the Word of God as music.*  
— Martin Luther

This thesis has been developed in part to fill the absence of a Lutheran voice among those engaged in appreciative study of a theological aesthetic in music. I have also pursued this thesis because music in the Lutheran Church, particularly in the USA but not limited to the American setting, has become a divisive subject splitting congregations, clergy and church musicians into various factions.

Accordingly this thesis has been Christological because as the Word spoke creation into the void at the beginning and as from the cross the Word made flesh spoke the new creation into the void of a disordered world, so the Lutheran way endeavors to speak solely that Word, that Christ. Secondly, the schismatic nature of the Lutheran conflicts over music will not be reconciled by further debates about music. The divisiveness in music is symptomatic of divisiveness in Christology. When Lutherans confess Christ fully and truly, then with one voice we will confess music in the Lutheran Church fully and truly.

Since a thoroughly Christological aesthetic in music is a new thing among Lutherans—although as one could read in the historical survey of this thesis elements of Christology have implicitly influenced music among Lutherans since the Reformation—my thesis serves as an introit to further study and reflection. Once having considered music through Christology, like the spokes of a wheel radiating from the center hub, the many facets of music inside and outside the Church are heard



anew. “All this is from God.”<sup>1</sup>

With this Christological understanding one comes to realize that as the preacher’s mouth is the very mouth of Christ, so likewise the singer’s mouth singing the Word-inhabited music is the very mouth of Christ. The organist’s hands playing the Word-inhabited music are the very hands of Christ. The hearers’ ears apprehending the Word-inhabited music are the very ears of Christ. For Christ is present where His Word of promise is proclaimed. This suggests fruitful directions for the training of pastors and church musicians.

This also calls for faith. Only faith recognizes the preacher’s mouth as the mouth of Christ, but before faith’s recognition the preacher’s mouth is the mouth of Christ. Likewise, only faith recognizes the singer’s mouth as the mouth of Christ, the organist’s hands as the hands of Christ, the hearers’ ears as the ears of Christ. Faith alone recognizes that these earthly elements are the masks of God, the faces of Christ’s presence. Yet even before faith recognizes the presence of Christ, He is present, participating in the music of composer, performer and hearer.

The *Verbum musicum* may be pressed further. The composer who is in Christ by faith and in whom, by the same faith, Christ dwells, remains the face of Christ in all the music that composer creates, whether this music is for the Divine Service or for the chamber or the concert hall. The performer, who by faith is in Christ and in whom Christ lives by the same faith, remains the face of Christ in all music performed. This is true whether the performance is in the Divine Service or in other large or small settings, formal or informal, outside the Divine Service. The hearer of music, who also lives by faith in Christ and in whom by faith Christ also lives, remains the face of

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<sup>1</sup> See II Corinthians 5:16-18.



Christ hearing music, all music, with the ears of Christ. Whether it is the music composed, performed and heard within the Divine Service or any music that can be composed, performed and heard, the hearer as one in whom Christ dwells and who dwells in Christ hears what testifies to Christ the Word in, with and under the music. This too calls for further reflection and study. For not only is it essential to train church musicians in Christology, as is frequently done among Lutherans, but even more essential, in view of the Lutheran aesthetic, to be training pastors and theologians in music.

Music is a gift that comes from God to us through Jesus Christ by whom all things were made, including music and musicians. Music is a gift that flows from us to God through the same Christ in whom all things are held together, including music and musicians. A Lutheran aesthetic in music must be thoroughly Christological. As Luther observed long ago,

[Music] is a sign of the Gospel: the lifting of the Law and the joyful freedom of the children of God shine forth in the round dance of a *Liedmotette*... The Gospel [yes, and therefore the Christ] calls for music!<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Luther. quoted in Söhngen, *Theologie der Musik*, p. 321.



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## *Abstract*

*Musica Christi: A Lutheran Aesthetic* by Marion Lars Hendrickson

This is a study of music in the Lutheran Church by means of a Christological aesthetic. It is a method that has not been attempted by Lutheran theologians and musicians in the United States and only obliquely suggested by theologians and musicians in the Lutheran churches of northern Europe. It is, therefore, a new and much needed study.

The first of the two parts is a brief survey of the historical practice of Lutheran church music from the Reformation Era to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It reveals that many aspects of a Christological aesthetic are implied in the music of each era, with significant threads of Christological continuity running throughout the history of Lutheran church music. A secondary benefit of this historical portion is the introduction to an English speaking audience the world of thought among Lutheran theologians and musicians whose work in German, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and Latin has not been translated into English. Unless otherwise noted the translations are my own.

The second part brings together the implicit and explicit Christological elements revealed by the historical survey. What the Lutheran Church believes, teaches and confesses about Jesus Christ is formative for music as for all matters of faith and life. When considered in this context music ceases to be mere music. It becomes Christological music; not an aesthetic Christology, but rather a Christological aesthetic in music.

The primary element that is new in this study permeates the entire work. There is a full participation by Christ in music and by music (with composer, performer, hearer) in Christ. This *communicatio* gives full expression to the definitive Lutheran motto of “singing and saying” the Gospel, allowing one to grasp that which by either alone could not fully be known.